THE DIVINE MYSTERY

BY ALLEN UPWARD

Author of "The New Word"

From the English Reviews

"In any abstract of the work it is impossible to do justice either to its erudition, originality, or charm. . . . The author's wide learning is evident on every page. He is fully master of his material, and the result is one of the most original and inspiring books which have appeared of late." — *From* MAN, *the organ of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain.*

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The Author

Allen Upward has had an interesting and adventurous life. After practicing at the bar in Ireland and England, he went in '97 to Greece as a volunteer, ran the blockade of Crete, and took part in the invasion of Turkey. Later on, he was appointed British Resident of Northern Nigeria, where he did brilliant work as an administrator. He has published numerous works in verse and prose, of which the best known perhaps is his "New Word," a book of which one American critic said, "It is the first compelling book of the 20th century," and another, "'The New Word' turns the world upside down."

THE
DIVINE MYSTERY

A Reading of the History of Christianity down to the Time of Christ

BY

ALLEN UPWARD

"The Divine Mystery" follows in order after "The New Word," the book by which Mr. Upward is best known in this country. As the subtitle indicates, the book is a study of the Christian elements in the pre-Christian religions. The author, who is an ethnological and archæological scholar of great learning, collects into one imaginative synthesis all the distinctively Christian elements in the history and mythology of the races of the world prior to the time of Christ.

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A READING OF THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY DOWN TO THE TIME OF CHRIST

BY

ALLEN UPWARD

AUTHOR OF "THE NEW WORD"

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1915

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ADVERTISEMENT

THE present volume is the first of a series intended to elucidate the history and significance of the greatest revolution in history. The writer is proceeding with a study of Jesus the Nazarene, and the intricate problem of the growth and formation of the Christian creed and scriptures.

It was not my original purpose to do more than summarise and combine the labours of previous students, and hence this outline was written mainly from memory. In deference to the wishes of others, I have now provided it with a modest furniture of references and citations for the guidance of readers unfamiliar with the subject (in doing which I have had the expert assistance of Mr. Dudley Wright); but I need not say that these notes give a very inadequate idea of the material actually drawn upon. It is as a work of interpretation, and not as a work of reference, that the volume has been planned, and the only scientific merit it can pretend to is that claimed by Bossuet for his *Universal History*, the merit of a general chart which shows the relations between different provinces. Current literature is seriously deficient in comprehensive surveys of the kind; and I may be allowed to pay a tribute in passing to Professor Myres' lucid sketch, *The Dawn of History*, which I could wish to be read by way of introduction to these pages.

So far as I am aware this is the first attempt at a complete outline of the Christian evolution in the light of modern knowledge, and perhaps the chapters dealing with the rise of monotheism may be found to bridge a real gap. No reader can feel so strongly as the writer how tentative and provisional every work of this kind must be for a long time to come; but if we were to wait for perfect certainty in the field of history, we should wait for ever.

A. U.

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THE DIVINE MYSTERY.

What Magnets far away control our Motions here?
What mystic Messages vibrating from the Sky,
In what immortal Code that baffles mortal Ear,
As those bright Signs in Heaven bewilder mortal Eye?
What Lights are they of which we the poor Shadows seem;
The changing Phantasies of Whose eternal Dream?

Into what Meaning clear ascends our muffled Speech?
What Shuttles throw the Woof whose Warp is all we know?
What Actors on what Stage does this Rehearsal teach?
In what glad Blossoms there are these sad Buds to blow?
What Strain beyond the Stars completes our Minor here;
What Divine Mystery in what remoter Sphere?

ALLEN UPWARD.

THE ENCHANTED CITY

ONCE upon a time there stood in the middle of the lands an enchanted City, whose foundations were laid in blood. It was a holy city, inhabited by the subjects of a Wizard Emperor, reigning over a fairy country far away. All the firm land had once obeyed the Emperor, who had raised it from the deep by words of might. But there had been rebellion in Fairyland; and the traitors, driven out from their native seat, had come among men, and tempted them to join in war against the great White Throne. Wherefore sentence of death had been recorded against mankind by their Suzerain Lord; yet he so loved them that his royal Son had taken their guilt upon himself, and by his death on earth had earned their pardon. Thereafter he had risen from the grave, and had gone back to Fairyland, where is no death; bequeathing to men his Father's invitation to follow him some day to that bright abode. They who had heard the good news, and become reconciled with their Suzerain, were called the Saints; and their camp and dwelling-place was called the City of God.

The City of God was besieged by seen and unseen enemies, against whom it was aided by mysterious protectors. The citizens were put into bonds, they were scourged, wild beasts were let loose against them, they were banished or crucified. From these calamities they were delivered by magical arms: they drank poisons

without hurt, handled vipers, passed through prison walls, crossed seas and deserts in a moment, healed diseases, and raised the dead to life. They were cheered by visions of triumph to come. The city of their oppressors, that great city which reigned over the kings of the earth, had been doomed to destruction by a mighty voice, saying: Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the Great. And a holy city, the new Jerusalem, had been seen descending out of heaven from God.

These mystical predictions were almost literally fulfilled. The Kingdom of God on earth had been likened to a seed sown in the ground, no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, which, when it grows up, is greater than any plant, and puts out great branches; so that the birds of the air can lodge in the shadow thereof. At the end of three hundred years this parable was found to be a prophecy. The mortal enemies of the Kingdom became its lieges. Strange peoples coming from lands outside the old sacred geography settled within the divine realm, and embraced its polity. The true citizens were lost in the throng of aliens, and the spiritual kingdom was transformed into a temporal one.

In its earthly avatar the kingdom was called the Holy Roman Empire, and the new Jerusalem was called the New Rome. The old Rome, that Scarlet Woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, was stripped of her purple robe, and reeled from all her seven hills, a prey to Christian armies—Gothic or Greek, imperial or barbarian. The owl hooted in the palaces of persecuting Cæsars. And for a thousand years, the time appointed by the prophecy, the saints worshipped Jehovah in the holy city of Constantine; the psalms of Zion were chanted in the Christian

temples; and the wondrous Book of Israel replaced the literature and science of a world destroyed.

The Catholic Millennium endured from the building of Constantinople to be the capital of Christendom, until its conquest by the True Believers of Islam. (A.D. 324-1453.)

During the first part of this period, while modern Europe was in the making, Christian Byzantium continued to be the chief focus of temporal and spiritual power; and the main channel into which all the intellectual currents set, and out of which they flowed again. It was the lighthouse of civilisation shining over the barbarian flood. The tribes of the farthest frozen Baltic told of the great city, Micklegard, round the foot of whose glittering walls the sea of heathenism washed to and fro. Therein the trolls toiled at their smithy, forging logical fetters for the White race. During those five hundred years the bands of Catholic dogma were drawn more and more straitly round the spirit of man, and the European brain took that Byzantine stamp and pattern that it still retains. The Nicene Confession, and the canon of the sacred scriptures, as they emerged from the Byzantine forge, are still the rule of the common faith in continents whose existence that faith implicitly denies.

Throughout this Dark Age the minds of men seemed to be wrapped in a magical sleep from which they feared to be awakened. The least glimmer of science irritated them like a light flashed into the eyes of a sleeper. Belated denizens of the Byzantine dreamland yet linger among us, who believe the earth is flat, and map it as a disk, with the north pole in the centre and the antarctic regions forming the outer rim. They

deem that every sea-captain who sails south of the equator falsifies his log, and that the laws of perspective drawing are wrong. Contradiction rouses their anger; they deem it contradiction of God. Their temper was once the common temper of mankind. It was a temper inculcated as the first of duties, and literally seared into the human frame with red-hot irons.

Yet the very anxiety with which medieval society watched for, and repressed, every sign of mental awakening betrays the existence of an uneasy sense that its dream did not correspond with the reality. The note of apology runs through all Christian literature, and where there is controversy there cannot be complete assurance. The tremendous emphasis placed upon intellectual assent as the condition of salvation, and on dissent as the most heinous of all crimes, is significant of the same thing. The Jews were a perpetual thorn in the Christian consciousness; hostile witnesses whose testimony was necessary to one half of the creed, and contradictory of the other. In the highest flood of fanaticism aroused by the Crusades we are startled to hear the chief Order of Crusaders accused of the most fearful blasphemies. A Holy Roman Emperor, educated by a Pope, is charged by another Pope with having written a book concerning Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet, entitled *The Three Impostors*. The Knights Templars may not have been guilty of trampling on the Cross. Frederick II probably wrote no such book. But the accusations are enough to show what thoughts worked under the surface of all that belligerent orthodoxy. We seem to see men half aware of their hallucination, and proportionately angry with those who do not share it.

The fall of the great citadel of Christendom evidently gave the signal for the fall of the enchanted City of which it had been the material embodiment. Within a hundred years Magellan had touched at the antipodes, and Copernicus had loosed the earth from its foundations. The Renaissance was directly connected with the flight of a handful of Greek scholars, and the dispersal of a few of the manuscripts hoarded in the libraries of Constantinople. But this literary activity could not have made so much difference unless the hour had struck on that clock which measures out our planetary revolutions. The Reign of the Saints had reached its end. It was as if a spell had been dissolved. The miracles silently ceased. The thousand years' hibernation of knowledge was over, and the sleeper was beginning to awaken in a new world.

Since then the human spirit has travelled fast and far, while it still seems only in the beginning of its career. One by one the shrivelled arts and sciences have put forth fresh leaves and burst into more vigorous life. The progress has not only been resumed at the point at which it was arrested. The new spirit is altogether mightier, more daring and more victorious than the old. We may liken this marvellous ordeal to that of the caterpillar, shrinking and stiffening in its narrow case as a preparation for another and more glorious avatar. To-day the strait walls of the Byzantine chrysalis are cracking on all sides, and the butterfly of Science has begun to spread visible wings.

This is the most memorable chapter in the past history of the human race; and no wise man will read it as a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. The Byzantine theology may slowly fade into mythology. The Catholic

worship may linger as a pagan cult and pleasant ceremony for centuries to come. In the meanwhile we are called upon to interpret the historical revelation, as the latest chapter of that Divine Book of which we seem to be both writers and readers. If the Christian *symbol* be no longer true in the sense in which our benighted forefathers wrote and read it, yet it must be true as the result of some cause; as the expression of some law, some power still working to mould our planetary fates.

Of old the assurance of everlasting life was imparted to men in Mysteries, wherein the things unseen were set forth in parable, or drama, under types and symbols. So the Christian Fathers interpreted the sacred history of Israel as a Divine Mystery, played out by the Creator upon the stage of the Holy Land, and intended to educate mankind for a fuller revelation yet to come.

To the thoughtful mind all history is sacred, and the whole world is a holy land in which man walks as in a garden planted by the hand of his Creator. Mystery encompasses his steps on every side; a divine voice breathes in the rustling of the trees at eventide and in the songs of birds at sunrise; he reads the nightly scripture of the stars, and his heart accompanies the solemn chorus of the sea. There is a universe within him as without; the network of his frame is a battleground wherein unseen and uncalculated forces meet and struggle for the mastery; his very thoughts are not his own, but the reincarnations of ancestral spirits, or else the angels of heavenly and hellish powers. So, moving from deep unto deep, he plays his part in some degree like a somnambulist, plays in a miracle play of which he feels himself to

be the hero, yet cannot altogether seize the plot, nor tell what are the true surroundings of his little stage, nor guess what may await him when he shall pass behind the scenes.

Of this Divine Mystery the Christian gospel is a reflection in the heart and mind of man. It is an old, old story, retold from generation unto generation. Its words and signs are inherited from a primeval language, a true catholic speech, whose grammar is being recovered in our days from the tombs and dust of prehistoric peoples, from the daily life of savage tribes, and from the tales that are still the bible of the peasant and the child. Its principles, the old church historian who drew up the Nicene Creed declares—" have not been recently invented, but were established, we may say, by the Deity in the natural dictates of pious men of old, from the very origin of our race." (*Eusebius*, H.E., I, 4.)

Looked at from the outside, the chemical process that precipitated the Byzantine faith appears as a great recrystallisation of universal fears and hopes, carried out in the crucible of a planetary heat wave, whose coming had been more or less distinctly felt beforehand by a series of true prophets from Zoroaster to John the Baptist.

With this clue we may hope to explore the deserted chambers of the soul wherein our forefathers inhabited, till what had been their city of refuge became their prison and their grave. Their ghostly footsteps yet haunt the broken pavement, the air is heavy with their sighs; their blood has left dark stains upon the walls. —Was not this the dungeon of the Holy Inquisition of God ?

THE DIVINE MYSTERY

CHAPTER I

THE NATIVITY OF GENIUS

1. The Son of Thunder. 2. Function of Genius. 3. The Wizard. 4. The Weather.

1. *The Son of Thunder*

I WAS sitting like Abraham in my tent door in the heat of the day, outside a Pagan city of Africa, when the lord of the thunder appeared before me, going on his way into the town to call down thunder from heaven upon it.

He had on his wizard's robe, hung round with magical shells that rattled as he moved; and there walked behind him a young man carrying a lute. I gave the magician a piece of silver, and he danced before me the dance that draws down the thunder. After which he went his way into the town; and the people were gathered together in the courtyard of the king's house; and he danced before them all. Then it thundered for the first time for many days; and the king gave the thunder-maker a black goat—the immemorial reward of the performing god.

So begins the history of the Divine Man, and such is his rude nativity. The secret of genius is sensitiveness. The Genius of the Thunder who revealed himself to me could not call the thunder, but he could be called by it. He was more quick than other men to feel the changes of the atmosphere; perhaps he had rendered his nervous system more sensitive still by fasting or mental

abstraction; and he had learned to read his own symptoms as we read a barometer. So, when he felt the storm gathering round his head, he put on his symbolical vestment, and marched forth to be its Word, the archetype of all Heroes in all Mysteries.

2. *The Function of Genius*

The form of energy called electricity is only the most coarse and obvious of the ethereal, and doubtless also sub-ethereal, influences forever at work weaving the woof of Life upon the warp of Matter. Yet it remained outside the realm of our science down to the other day. The lunar and the solar powers are only recognised by us in their plainest operations, as they govern the seasons and the tides. The study of man's dependence on the stars lies under the ban of the Materialist superstition. We still wonder why it is hot one day and cold the next; and our priests try to control the weather by their prayers. And yet if we should understand all these we should have only the bones and skin of the All-Thing in view, while the intricate nerves lay hidden from our dim microscopes. We should be as far as ever from the knowledge of those invisible winds that blow upon us out of the ether, between the interstices of sense, and reveal themselves in moods that govern us against our reason and our will.

It is to this unexplored environment that we must needs refer so much of our experience as we cannot account for by causes that have come within our scanty field of observation. We are like barks with sails spread and rudder fixed to go in one direction, while a strong undercurrent sweeps them in another. The fool who pretends there is no Strength outside his reckoning is the same

fool at heart who draws the chart of Heaven on the false projection of his own mind, and fills up the unexplored regions with mermaids and unicorns and flying men. Every positive system of philosophy, rationalist or religious, is an attempt to leave out the universe; like those chemists who believe they can compress the whole nourishment of beef in a tabloid, or manufacture bread from salts. Whereas the natural food derives its virtue from all the powers of air and light, and the very spikes that crown the growing barley are little mouths drinking in electricity to feed it.

For this invisible environment in which we live and move and have our being man has found no better name than Heaven. The Divine Man or, as he is better named, the Genius, is the spokesman and interpreter of Heaven. It is his function to reveal the ethereal influences as they are manifested within himself, in his emotions; like the photographic plate that by its own changes tells us the chemical constituents of the stars.

The relation of Genius to Humanity may be compared with that of man himself to the brute creation; and even the infirmities that veil the divinity of genius may remind us that the master of the elephant is concealed in the form of a trembling pygmy. Thus man begins his own career as the animal of genius.

Now the superiority of man lies evidently in his greater faculty of growth. He is the topmost twig of the great Tree of Life, and the one still rising heavenward. The common mark of all the lower forms of life is fixity. Compared with man they seem like dried-up branches in which the sap has ceased to run. They are in equilibrium with their environment. Man may be defined scientifically as the changing animal, the one that is still growing; in a word, he is the Child of evolution.

Out of all living forms his is the one on which the hand of the Creator is still visibly at work. Man is the burning mountain in whose entrails the seed of fire yet glows, while all the peaks around are smitten into ice.

And of this uppermost branch the final shoot is Genius, the last delicate bud upon the Tree of Life. The historian of Christian folklore has been inspired beyond his own intention in naming his vast work the *Golden Bough.* The magical bough is Genius, for it is the medium of communication between God and Man. These golden spikes that crown the forehead of Humanity are like the slender wire that rises from a receiving station to catch the unseen message that comes across the sea from a strange continent. So does the prophet intercept the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the old Folk pictures, copied and handed down from days when kings were worshipped, every king wears upon his head a circlet of golden spikes. That is the crown of genius, and it is the Crown of Thorns.

The divine right of Genius has been denied for the first time in these latter days by a school of criminologists whose words have been eagerly taken up by the great army of dunces. Insanity is infectious, and just as those who live too much with the insane suffer disturbance of their own mental balance, so it should seem that those who have given too much study to degenerate types learn to see nothing but degeneracy in every departure from the normal type. Had such minds been at work some hundred thousand years ago they would have esteemed the first man a degenerate monkey, and the first monkey a degenerate beaver. Had such eugenists presided over the creation life would never have been allowed to

mount above the lizard. Nay, has not the conservative faith been defined once for all in the opinion that Life is a disease of Matter ?

The disease of Genius is nothing but its greater power to feel. Its pains are growing pains. As the primeval form of life that crawls in blindness along the dark sea-floor has been named the Changeling (*amoeba*), so is Man the Changeling of the animals, and so is Genius the Changeling of Humanity. The old Folk scriptures have prophesied of him by that name as well, telling how the Changeling frets in his mortal environment, and pines for that happier region whence he came. And his rough foster-parents often use him ill; the Ugly Duckling is driven forth into the wild, and this disinherited Son of Man has not where to lay his head.

3. *The Wizard*

The Genius, or Divine Man, in his first avatar is the Wizard. He is the wizard of the foreworld—that divine, daemonic figure which throws its shadow across the mist of primitive imagination like the Spectre of the Brocken. The oldest literature in the world, or at least that which has best preserved its antique form and spirit, is found in the Kalevala, the Bible of the Finns; and it is the epic of the Wizard. Genius has not yet specialised; the Wizard of the Kalevala is a Jack-of-all-trades, and we may discern in him the stem from which were to branch the poet and the chemist, the King and the God.

Many reasons make it likely that it was in the part of a barometer that the wizard revealed himself first. His name, both in its older forms, *witga* and *wicca*, and in its newer one, has the same root as wisdom and vision; and the

expression weather-wise suggests that the first prophet was a weather-prophet.

In man's continuing effort to reach harmony with his environment, whether by adjusting himself to it, or by mastering it and so adjusting it to himself; in man's search for the right Way of Life—to use less pretentious language—Genius has been his guide and leader. The faculty of weather-wisdom, as it showed itself first in the sympathetic storm excited in the nervous organisation of the prophet by the storm without, was a genuine faculty; the wizard was, to anticipate the language of the Catholic Church, truly the incarnate Word of the Thunder-God. No sign could be more unmistakable, or more easily remarked, and none more directly useful to man in the hunting and fishing stage. It was the alphabet of revelation, brought down to the capacity of a child.

4. *The Weather*

The same simple phenomenon that revealed the Divine Man below revealed the God above. Man's dependence on the weather was a symbol, easily read by the savage, of the dependence of Earth on Heaven. Of all the natural changes that influence and shape the life of man those of the weather are the most striking; and long ages had to pass before the rise of astronomy and agriculture taught man to look farther heavenward than to the clouds.

To this truth the history of language, of religion, and of astronomy bears ample testimony. Indeed, the lesson of astronomy has not yet been fully learnt. The French still use the same word *temps* for weather and for time. The seasons in India are even now named after the cold, the heat

and the rains. The ancient year of the Yorubas contains only 224 days, the dry season being a blank in the almanac. "It was the first rumble of the thunder that recalled the fisherman and hunter to their huts (writes R. E. Dennett in his *Nigerian Studies*, p. 136), and caused them to commence to count the days." The English names of Spring and Fall survive from a later Vegetable Year, yet even they are older than astrology. According to the astronomer, Sir Norman Lockyer, Stonehenge was first oriented for a year whose quarter-days fell half-way between the solar solstices and equinoxes.[1] That is the old Farmer's Year, which began with the sowing of the seed in spring, and whose quarter-days may be found in the calendar under the names of Shrovetide, Whitsuntide, Grotto Day and Guy Fawkes Day.

> When looking for a folk-festival that should fall half-way between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox I turned to an almanac and found the entry Grotto Day against the seventh of August. Going through a suburban street towards the end of July I found boys already forming circles of shells and stones on the pavement. They told me that they knew nothing of the fixed date in the calendar and simply made a rough guess at the right season, as did their neolithic sires. So also, after surmising that James I. might have fixed the opening of Guy Fawkes' Parliament for a popular feast-day, I learned that in the United States Thanksgiving Day is still a movable feast, the date of which is fixed every year by the government for some time in November. No anthropologist can doubt that Guy Fawkes' bonfire must be far older than Guy Fawkes. —"Grotto" is the Scandinavian *gryta*, a mill.

Thus it would seem clear that celestial science began with the clouds, and not the stars. When the Men Above first took shape in the

[1] See *Stonehenge and Other British Monuments*, ch. iii, pp. 19-21.

imagination of men below, they inhabited the clouds. The Rain-Cloud Indra is the foremost figure in the old Vedic pantheon of the Hindus.[1] The Scandinavian Thor or Thunar is older than Odin, and his attributes clothe Zeus and Jove.[2] The Thunder God is missing from the pantheon of Egypt, where the clouds rarely gather, and the national life is regulated by the Nile. In Europe the Thunderer remained the Father of the Gods down to the Christian era. And the old religion survives in the oaths of the French and Germans. Bad language is heretical language, and he who swears by *Donner* or *tonnerre* is a dissenter from the Nicene Creed.

The first scene in the life of the Divine Man, therefore, shows him as a half-naked savage,

[1] See Prof. Anthony Macdonnel's "Vedic Mythology" in Bühler's *Grundress de Indo Ansche Philogie*, pp. 54-67 (published 1897).

Indra is the national god of the Vedic Indians. As a name it dates from the Indo-Iranian period and is of uncertain meaning. The significance of his character is, however, sufficiently clear. He is primarily the thunder-god, the conquest of the demons of drought or darkness and the consequent liberation of the waters or the winning of light forming his mythological essence. Secondarily, Indra is the god of battle, who aids the victorious Aryan in the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants of India. The thunderbolt (vagra) is the weapon exclusively appropriate to Indra. He is called "he who is attended by the Marut hosts." The Maruts are the clouds charged with rain and lightning.

[2] See article "Thor," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, by Prof. Hector Munro Chadwick, Lecturer on Scandinavian Literature, Cambridge.

Thor was one of the chief deities of Scandinavia. He is represented as a middle-aged man of enormous strength, quick in anger but benevolent towards mankind. He is second to Odin, who is represented as his father, but in Iceland he takes precedence of this god. But there is no doubt he was in Iceland worshipped more than any other god, and the same seems to have been the case in Norway. Even in the temple at Upsala his figure is said to have occupied the chief place. There is evidence that a similar deity called Thunar or Thonar was worshipped in England, but little information is to be obtained regarding him except that the Romans identified him with Jupiter. Outside the Teutonic area he had considerable affinities, not only with Jupiter or Zeus but still more with the Lithuanian and Slavonic gods, such as Perkun or Perkunas-Perun, the Thunder-god, who is also the Vedic Parganya, the rain-cloud-god or the thunder-cloud called Parganya in the Veda. Thor, like this word, means thunder.

cowering in his cave before the coming storm, and only half awake to the connection between the trouble inside his own head and the trouble outside in the sky. That trembling wretch is the first interpreter of Heaven, mediator and medium between man and his Creator. He is the father of all the human gods, of all the prophets and the priests, of the rude medicine man and of the College of Physicians, of the astrologer and the astronomer, of fetishism and philosophy; he is the teacher of the crafts and handicrafts, of art and science, of poetry and history, of the Law and of the Gospel. So Heaven calls him visibly, calls him even as Paul of Tarsus was called, calls him in pain and anguish to take up his great ministry to mankind, and calls him as its Son.

The price he pays for his prophetic gift is frailty. Rarely in the literature of the world does the Wizard figure as the warrior. He may split the rock and divide the sea and send plagues upon all the land of Egypt, but as soon as he meets the Bedawin in battle he has to call in Joshua. He is the hero in the tragic meaning of the word, that is to say the sufferer, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The title that has been usurped by the strong acquired its glory from the neurotic weakling who bore it first.

From the beginning his mysterious endowment makes him more feared than loved. He benefits men, but he is not understood by them, nor does he altogether understand himself. The awe inspired by the thunder extends to its representative, the visible incarnation of its power. Who shall tell what are the limits of that power, or what other dangers lurk in that trembling frame? Saint, holy, accursed, consecrated—all these words once had the same meaning: the Wizard is *tapu*.

Note on Shrove-tide.

Professor Skeat derives the word Shrove from shrive, considering Shrove-tide as the season of confession and shrift; and, departing from his own principles of etymology, derives shrive itself from the Latin *scribere*, to write.[1] But it is contrary to the first principles of anthropology to derive the name of a folk festival in so round-about way from a foreign vocabulary, and we should rather suspect there has been a confusion of the Latin with an older Saxon word. Such a word appears in shire, formerly spelt *schire*, and in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, *scir*.[2] The original meaning of this word is lost, the oldest that has been proposed for it being "business." Although Skeat is opposed on phonetic grounds to deriving *scir* from *scar*, the older form of *share*, there seems to be no objection to reversing the process, and deriving *scar* from *scir*.[3] In short it seems probable that as in the case of *palm*,[4] the monks have effaced an ancient northern word under a Latin spelling, and that Shrove-tide was originally the season when the earth was ploughed, or shared. But there is much evidence for the former existence among the northern peoples of Europe, as elsewhere, of village communities, owning a tract of land in common, the arable portion of which was divided among the households by lot, every year before the ploughing began.[5] The most im-

[1] "Although it thus appears as a strong verb, it does not appear to be a true Teutonic word."—*Etymological Dictionary*, Shrove-tide.

[2] Root unknown. *Ibid.*, Shire.

[3] Compare the Finnish word *kirja*, meaning "book, mark, furrow, incision," etc.—*Hist. of Language*, by H. Sweet, p. 114. This philologist considers the root of *kirja* identical with the root of *shear*, *score*, and plough-*share*.

[4] See *The New Word*, end.

[5] See Digby's *History of the Law of Real Property*, pp. 5-6.

"There was the arable portion or the district of cultivated land, in which separate plots were held, for a time at all events, in severalty, by individual

portant business of Shrove-tide, therefore, was the casting of lots,[1] and this practice serves to identify the festival with the Jewish feast of Purim.

While Hebrew scholars seem to be agreed that the word Purim has the meaning of "lots," they have not been able to explain why the feast should have been so called. But we are informed that, in the Babylonian, *puru* means "dividing an inheritance by lot," and also, in Assyrian, "a term of office," so that the analogy with Shrove-tide becomes very close indeed; and it is strengthened by the theory of scholars that Purim was a Persian, that is to say, an Aryan institution. The whole evidence points to the existence of a great spring festival, common to all the agricultural peoples of the northern continent, when the lands were divided for sowing, annual victims chosen for sacrifices, and annual officers chosen to conduct the business of the community.

members of the community, subject to certain customary regulations as to common cultivation and enjoyment. The most usual of these were that the arable land should be divided into three fields, one of which should lie fallow every third year and that the whole community should have rights of common pasturage on the fallow portion and on the stubbles of the cropped fields between harvest and seed-time."

[1] To this day the English auctioneer sells divided portions of land, etc., as "lots." The Greek word *moira* means both the portion and the Fate that *allots* it.

CHAPTER II

THE WISE MEN

1. The Seer. 2. The Witch. 3. The Enchanter. 4. The Medicine Man. 5.The God.

1. *The Seer*

In outlining the functions of the Wizard as Prophet, Sorcerer, Magician, Scientist and God, I do not mean to suggest that these aspects of his character succeeded each other in the order in which I have considered them. All such distinctions are but meridional lines drawn across the map. The character of genius is complex, and neither the wizard nor his clients were quick to separate any one of his faculties from the rest.

It is a probable suggestion, and it is not put forward as anything more, that the prophetic faculty first attracted attention in connection with the weather. But once recognised, it was not long confined to a single field.

Neither in ancient nor in modern times has the *seer*, or optical sensitive, shown himself to understand the nature and limitations of his power. The faculties of second-sight, or vision of the future, and clear-sight, better known by its French name of clairvoyance, the vision of the present, have been confounded. It is only within recent years, and in the teeth of much prejudice on the part of the scientific as well as the religious vulgar, that the subject has been brought within the scope of serious investigation.

The general results of that investigation point to the conclusion that the seer is sensitive to a force called telepathy, which acts between brain and brain.[1] The excitement in another mind, whether that of an individual or a group, sets up a sympathetic excitement in the seer's, so that his brain appears to reproduce, like a photographic plate, the thoughts, and even the unconscious impulses, latent in another. Thus the seer perceives as events in the future events which are already in existence as intentions or dispositions. When those intentions have not risen to the surface of the mind in which they lurk, or when the disposition is that of the collective mind of a group or public, the seer's prediction is in the strictest sense a revelation.

> The London fortune-tellers whom I have tested have generally appeared to me to be reading my own thoughts, in so far as they have not been merely guessing. One predicted with surprising cleverness two enterprises which I had in view, but as I afterwards changed my mind and undertook neither, the " prophecy " was falsified accordingly. Another, whom I consulted after I had formed the design of going to Africa in a judicial capacity, foretold that I should go abroad, and travel about from a centre. This was a detail which had not been present to my own consciousness, and it was very closely satisfied by a tour which I made through my Nigerian

[1] See Podmore's *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*, p. 11.

"We have at either end of the chain a physical event—the changes of the cerebral tissue—which are presumed to correspond to every act of thought and sensation. And it is not without interest to note in this connection that the arrangement of some of the nerve cells in the brain bears a superficial resemblance to the *coherer* used in the reception of the message in wireless telegraphy."

Also on p. 12: "Sir W. Crookes hazards the suggestion that 'intense thought concentrated towards a sensitive with whom the thinker is in close sympathy may induce a telepathic chain of brain waves along which the message of thought can go straight to its goal without loss of energy due to distance."

province. But the seeress omitted to warn me that my Colonial career would be summarily closed by a nearly fatal illness, that being an event outside the scope of the telepathic force.

Most card-players have probably felt impulses to play some card that their partner was wishing for, a card that their judgment disapproved. Those who yield to such impulses win against their own judgment.

As an example of collective impression, I may mention that I myself have been able to foretell with substantial accuracy the result of every General Election in the United Kingdom for the last thirty years. In every case my opinion was not a judgment based on calculation, but a sympathetic response to the public sentiment.

We may regard it as established, therefore, that there is a genuine element in the prophetic faculty, although it is obscure and doubtful in its working; even if we exclude the possibility that coming events may cast their shadows before them in other, still more subtle ways, to which a neurotic organisation is sensitive.

The link that connects this faculty with that of the mere weather-prophet is that both are found associated with something abnormal in the nervous system. This is the fact which stands out most clearly in the history of vision.

It goes without saying that, in most ages and countries the knowledge of the future has been eagerly sought, and the prophet has enjoyed consideration in consequence. The fear which the wizard inspires is thus tempered with gratitude for his public and private services.

From this it follows that the seer has always had a strong motive for cultivating his faculty. His search for the best means of doing so led him so the discovery that it was best exercised in a ttate of trance, or ecstasy, when his attention was

released from the impressions of the waking sense ; and hence we find him everywhere resorting to artificial devices for inducing that abnormal condition of the nerves which the thunder-storm produced naturally.

The word " inspiration " is generally referred to the belief that a spirit took possession of the seer, and spoke through his mouth. Older than that belief, perhaps, was the discovery that the natural vapours of a cave or medicinal spring had an intoxicating power, as in the famous case of the oracle at Delphi. The seer, in this case a woman, took her stand on a three-legged stool, or tripod, placed over a crack in the floor of a cave, and became literally inspired by the fumes that issued from the earth.[1]

> But the mere act of breathing can be so managed, in the belief of the Hindus, as to increase man's " spiritual " power, and the Yoga of Breathing is now receiving attention from the professors of physical culture in England.

The dance is another mode of intoxication, still practised by the heathen wizard, all over the world, for its original purpose, while in the hands of the Muslim dervishes it is also given an astrological significance. Self-mutilation, like that of the priests of Baal, and sexual orgies like those of the Witches' Sabbath, and so many Pagan cults, may have come into existence in the same way, before ever they were developed as magical rites, or appropriated to the worship of the later gods. Fermented liquor is a more familiar means of intoxication, and its mysterious power made it sacred from its first discovery, as is proved by overwhelming evidence.

[1] See Frazer's *Pansanias*, vol. v, 286 ; Farnell's *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. iv, p. 187 *et seq.*

It is enough to cite the Dionysian or Bacchic cults, the sacred *haoma* of the Zarathustrians, the story of Noah, the vine that adorned the Jewish temple, the miracle of Cana, and the part played by wine and vinous imagery in the Christian mysteries. Muhammad's prohibition of wine went naturally with his warfare with idolatry; and even the zeal of modern teetotallers has a strong vein of religious fanaticism. As Grant Allen has remarked, the use of the word spirits for strong liquors is in the same line of thought.

The methods of the wizard have been imitated by the Buddhist monks, who stare into the bowl of a spoon,[1] and by the Christian monks who gazed at their navels in the monasteries of Mount Athos.[2] In each case the immediate object is the same, to escape from the dominion of the outward sense, in order to discern things visible to the inward sense. The monks of Mount Athos professed to see the light of Mount Tabor, that is to say, the illumination of Christ in his transfiguration. The Buddhists also declare themselves able to perceive a mystic light; while the adept goes farther and enjoys the sensation of quitting his earthly envelope and moving outside the bounds of time and space. The savage wizard claims precisely the same power. He believes himself, and is believed by others, to be able to

[1] Childers, quoted by Kern in *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 56.

The priest concentrates his mind upon a single thought, usually gazing intently on some object. Gradually his soul becomes filled with supernatural ecstasy and serenity, while his mind still reasons upon and investigates the subject chosen for contemplation. This is the first Jahana. Still fixing his mind upon the same subject, he thus frees his mind from reasoning and investigation. This is the second Jahana. Next his thoughts being fixed as before, he divests himself of ecstasy and attains the third Jahana which is a state of tranquil serenity. Lastly he passes to the fourth Jahana, in which the mind, exalted and purified, is indifferent to all emotions alike of pleasure or pain.

Childers adds: "The objects used for producing this state are spoons or small light bowls."

[2] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. lxiii, end.

transport himself to a distance, and work evil to his foes, while his body lies in a swoon or trance.

Closely akin to the monkish practices is the device of crystal-gazing in use by the fortune-tellers of medieval and modern Europe. Here the process is the same, though the immediate object is different, the aim of the fortune teller being, not spiritual ecstasy, but vision in the more primitive sense.

The last form of intoxication that need be referred to is that induced by the collective excitement of a crowd. Every orator is familiar with the stimulation afforded by an enthusiastic audience. Carried to a certain pitch this gives on one side the phenomena of revivalism, when neurotic individuals start up confessing their sins and declaring that they have "found the Saviour." On the other side the orator's excitement degenerates into the frenzy of the howling dervishes. George Sand discovered that in the nineteenth century howling was part of the ritual of the French workmen in their lodge meetings. In Welsh religious services it is still a common thing for the preacher to be carried away at a certain point in his discourse. His face becomes flushed, his manner changes, and his voice rises from the ordinary pitch into a strained, dithyrambic utterance known as the *hwyl*, and regarded as a sign of inspiration. It appears from the New Testament that in the early churches this "gift of tongues," at first valued as a miracle, soon had to be discarded as a nuisance. The prophet's outpourings degenerated into an unintelligible jargon, and the bishops were obliged to discountenance the practice.

> "Unless in using the gift of tongues you utter intelligible words, how can what you say be understood? You will be speaking to the winds. . . .

> At a meeting of the church I would rather speak five words with my mind, and so teach others, than ten thousand words when using the gift of tongues." (1 *Corinthians* xiv. 9 and 19.)

In spite of all the artificial means resorted to by the seer his inspiration remained a thing beyond his own control. There were times when he swooned in vain, as the priests of Baal gash themselves with their knives in the legend of Elijah. The true inspiration came not to the schools of the prophets but to the solitary herdsman of Tekoa.

> "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me,—Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." (*Amos* vii. 14.)

This is the second act of the tragedy, when the prophet comes to his own, and his own receive him not. The schools of the prophets are leagued together against the true prophet. So the temple of dead genius becomes the citadel of the living dunce. The original thinker labours in obscurity and poverty; and the class who will trade on his work as soon as he is dead, are in a conspiracy to silence him while he is yet on earth. "You build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them."

2. *The Witch*

So far we have seen the wizard only in his passive capacity, his nervous system responding to the play of electric and telepathic energy. But as regards the latter he is also an agent, and it is in his active capacity that he has most strongly impressed the imagination of mankind. As the seer he is dangerous merely as a live coal is

dangerous if approached. As the witch he is formidable at a distance, and the harm which he does may be voluntary as well as involuntary.

It is not easy to draw a clear line between the ordinary influence exerted by a strong will over a weaker one, and that more subtle influence which it is sought to distinguish by the name of telepathy or witchery. The simplest and most familiar form of witchery is displayed in the English parlour game called " willing." One of the party goes outside the room, while those inside agree that he or she shall perform some trifling action, such as finding a pin, on re-entering. The subject is then led in by one of the " willers," and does what is required in obedience to the collective will of the others.

The genuine character of such performances, and of the telepathic energy itself, is still a matter of discussion, but the following experiments overcame the scepticism in which I was brought up. The subject of one, a kinswoman of mine, was taking the passive part in the game described above. As I suspected unconscious muscular action on the part of the person guiding her, I silently concentrated my own will in the effort to bring her towards myself, and make her touch a different article to what had been agreed on. She at once obeyed me. Afterwards I found that she responded readily to similar exertions of my will; however I abandoned the experiments as unwholesome.

On another occasion a professional mesmerist was giving a private demonstration to some Dublin journalists. Each of us was asked to tell the mesmerist beforehand what he wished the subject to do. She then entered the room, blindfolded, and he proceeded to direct her by passes, without speaking to or touching her. She succeeded in everything till it came to my stipulation, which had been that she was to roll up the cloth on a small table. Suspecting that the performance might be managed by a code

of signals, I now silently concentrated my will in an effort to prevent the subject doing as I had asked. The result was that she broke down, approaching the table time after time, and then receding from it in despair. The mesmerist becoming greatly excited and using violent language about the poor girl, I at length withdrew my mental opposition, when the action was performed without further difficulty.

Alongside of the voluntary exercise of this power, however, there is a very wide-rooted belief in its involuntary exercise. The Japanese have a tale in which an injured woman, although she had forgiven the wrongdoer, was unable to prevent her sub-conscious resentment bewitching him, and blasting his life—an idea which deserves examination from the ethical standpoint. The evil eye is believed to bewitch in the same way without any malevolence on the part of its possessor, and even against his will. Thus the Roman populace credited Pope Pius IX with the evil eye, and shrank from him as a witch while they worshipped him as a God.

The Evil Eye is everywhere averted by the Lucky Hand. A young missionary passing through the Congo forest relates that the dwarfs came towards him holding their hands before their faces—a gesture which he was unable to understand.[1] He had come upon the perfectly sensible origin of two world-wide superstitions. The fixed gaze of certain individuals is actually painful, and the hand is the most obvious protection from it. With how much learning, but how little wisdom, the world is taught!

The English peasantry do not appear to have considered that the baleful influence of the witch

[1] See Lloyd's *In Dwarf Land and Cannibal Country*, p. 110.

"I then said to him (the pigmy), 'Come here and let us talk.' This I shouted several times, and very shyly he came towards me, followed by the others. When he got into the open space before my tent he seemed very unhappy, and stared at me in blank amazement and hid his face behind his hands."

was always exerted with malice aforethought. A hasty movement of indignation at a slight affront let loose the occult power. And it is quite incredible that the appalling number of witches formerly butchered in South Africa were regarded in the light of sorcerers by choice—on the contrary, it was the professional medicine-man, the so-called "witch-doctor," who smelt out the witches, and denounced them to the authorities; much as the European doctor notifies an infectious case.

The use of the word *smell* in this connection is of great significance to the philologist. The word *witch* is older in English than *wizard*, which is an importation from the French; and the numerous derivatives it has given to the language, such as *bewitch*, *witchery* and *witching*, warn us to treat it as the principal form. It is only in recent usage that it has become strictly feminine; Shakespeare uses it in the masculine.[1] It has been derived by lexicographers from the Anglo-Saxon *wicca*, *wicce*, and ultimately from a root associated with the sense of sight. But all our oldest words for perception are connected with the sense of smell, and independent observers have remarked the same of other languages. Now one of the most easily observed, and yet least understood, of natural marvels is the attraction of the dog by the *bitch*. Her scent seems to have an extraordinary power of penetrating intervening obstacles, and to excite the male in a much higher degree than is the case with other animals. It is again no more than a suggestion, but it is again a probable one, that this phenomenon caught the attention of primeval man, and was associated by him with the wizard's occult fascination. If so, the forms witch and bitch are not alike by accident.

In this way we obtain an explanation of the curious odium attaching to a word that, on the

[1] *Ant. and Cleo.*, I, ii; *Comedy of Errors*, IV, iv.

surface, does not seem more objectionable than mare or dog. Like other words commonly avoided, it is *tapu*.

It must be considered doubtful whether the ancient wizards ever discovered or practised the form of hypnotism brought into light by Mesmer in the eighteenth century, the distinctive feature of which is that the subject consents to submit himself to the mesmerist. It is almost unthinkable that a savage should deliver himself up to so terrible an experiment, as it must appear to him. The wizard habitually hypnotised himself, but where others were concerned the hypnotising had to be done by stealth, and with the aid of a ritual in which music and singing, vestments and incense, and all the familiar accessories of priestcraft played a part.

The fascination exerted by the cat and serpent over their prey attracted the notice of primitive man, in this connection, and both became sacred animals in consequence. In English folklore a black cat is the familiar companion of the witch, but in most other countries the serpent has become the sorcerer's totem.

It is noteworthy that both of these animals possess other magical gifts. Not only is the black cat highly charged with electricity, so as to emit sparks when rubbed, but the eye of the cat is a natural sundial, marking the hour of the day by the narrowing or widening of the pupil. It is to this circumstance that Massey attributes the high regard which it enjoyed in Egypt. The serpent, again, yields a mortal poison, and hence it became important to the wizard later on in his capacity as medicine man. Both animals, moreover, excite strong nervous feeling in some individuals, but this may be accounted for by heredity.

I was once obliged to hurry a favourite cat out of the room because of the extreme distress its presence caused to a visitor. The same sensitiveness is attributed to a famous living soldier, who wears the Victoria Cross.

Modern science is no more able than ancient superstition to assign limits to the power of the witch; but this much is certain, that it operates on the nervous system, and is therefore dependent very greatly for its effect on the belief of the subject. There is nothing incredible in the story of a duel between two Red Indian medicine-men, conducted entirely by telepathy. It went on till the victor "summoned up all his magic," and killed his antagonist on the spot.[1] The memory of such feats performed by prehistoric wizards lingers in Ireland and elsewhere in the belief of the peasantry that their priests can strike them dead.

An Irish barrister, educated in a Jesuit school, informed me that he knew of a man whose arm had withered in consequence of his having thrown a snowball at a priest. It is not impossible that the man's own superstition should have produced such a result.

A similar tradition, doubtless accounts for the dread and dislike with which the Russian popes are regarded. Their mere presence in a house is believed to spell misfortune, they are almost cut off from society, and generally have to marry in their own class.[2] A similar superstition has revived among the populace of Great Yarmouth since the holding of the Church Congress in their town was followed by an extraordinarily bad fishing season.

[1] See *Schoolcraft*, vol. vi, 626-656, on the Indian medicine man.

[2] "Whenever the great men of a village happen to be going out shooting, the pope makes a point of keeping quietly at home, in order to avoid the possibility of any unlucky rencounter."—*Shores of Lake Aral*, by Major L. Wood, ch. ii.

The Rev. A. J. Toyne, formerly of St. Nicholas, Yarmouth, informed me that lads meeting him in the street would turn their cap round and mutter, "No more luck." Their explanation, when questioned, was that it is only a custom. It is at all events a very sincere tribute to the validity of Anglican orders. The cap would seem to be a conductor, turned round to let the evil influence run out. A superstitious card-player will turn his chair.

It may be suggested that we have here one explanation of the Brahman caste of India. Although in later times the *tapu* changed its character, and the Brahman became sacred in the modern sense, it is more likely that the caste should have become segregated in primitive times under the influence of fear.

It is evident from all this that the old laws against witchcraft were not purely unreasonable. Many of the confessions extorted from the accused witches contain details which are corroborated by the comparative study of magic and religion.

To sum up—the wizard first appears in his active capacity as a malevolent rather than a benevolent being. As a seer he has commanded the respect of mankind ; as a witch he earns their dread and detestation. The same feeling towards the celestial Gods lingers in the myths of Prometheus and of Eden.

3. *The Enchanter*

Throughout the folk literature of the world, in the Arabian Nights and the English fairy tales, in Chinese novels and Egyptian papyri, the wizard always appears as the enchanter or magician, that is to say, as the man who is able to rule, or overrule, nature. In the latter case the power with which he is credited may be described literally as supernatural, in the only sense

in which the word is not an affront to reason. The wizard is believed to summon the rain-clouds and call down the thunder, and direct the moon to wax and wane, or to stand still over the valley of Ajalon. "What kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

No belief has had a more natural and reasonable origin than this. Primeval man, like the child, is moving about in worlds not realised. Everywhere around him wonderful things are happening, and he is groping his way towards the great law of cause and effect. He sees that the flight of his arrow is followed by the death of the stag, and he knows that his act is the cause, and the stag's fall is the consequence. The word *consequence* itself is a generalisation of man's experience that the effect *follows* the cause.

The case of the weather-prophet, of course, is not a real exception. Neither the thunder nor the wizard's headache is a cause, but both are symptoms of the unseen electrical tempest. But the savage can only judge by what he sees. The wizard's premonition comes before the thunder, and so the former seems to be the cause; the latter, the effect. It is well-known that in the present day the traveller's aneroid barometer is believed by his savage porters to cause the storm that it foretells, and receives worship in consequence.

> This fallacy, the mistaking of concurrent symptoms for cause and effect, has played, and still plays, a greater part in human philosophy than perhaps any other. It is nowhere more conspicuous than in historical writing, and particularly in everything that has been written about the rise of Christianity.

The various strands which we are able to distinguish in the general make-up of the wizard

character of course were not disentagled in real life, and thus, as in the case of the bundle of faggots, the strength of each was multiplied by the rest. The wizard was *tapu*, he was mysterious, dangerous and awful, he controlled the weather, and he controlled the mind of man. In every direction the limits of his power were unknown to himself and to others. It was a strictly logical corollary that this unseen and unexplored power should be called in to account for almost every happening that transcended the ordinary experience of the savage, or baffled his faculty of scientific reason. The savage state of mind is illustrated by the phrase " act of God," as used in marine insurance contracts, and by the language of the old woman who said that—" When you are on land, you can take some care of yourself, but once you are at sea the Almighty does what He likes." In primeval times the insurance policy would have run, " act of a wizard." Indeed, the old belief that the Lapland witches dispense the hurricane has by no means died out around the Bothnian coasts.

Most of the methods which we have seen in use by the wizard for the purpose of hypnotising himself or others, come into use equally in his dealings with nature ; and as it is in his supernatural character that the wizard is chiefly remembered, so it is in this connection that the arts in question have acquired prestige and significance.

Before the imagination of man had peopled outside nature with unseen forms, gifted with human intelligence, the wizard had long been in communication with the clouds and winds, as well as with the fowls of the air and the fishes of the lake and river. The oldest methods of communication are still the most widely understood ; the sign, the emotional cry and the symbol reach

the intelligence of children and foreigners, on whom grammatical speech would be wasted. In the same way they lingered in the usage of the wizard as the appropriate language in which to address his commands to the storm and flood. Thus consecrated by immemorial association, the methods were credited with a virtue of their own. The medicine-man's spittle, his words, and the drug he administered, all contributed to the patient's cure. The name *magical*, applied to the spells and incantations of the sorcerer, signifies no more than that. In the beginning all alike were magical, that is to say, *mighty*.[1]

We have already seen the simple origin of the magical charm. The virtue of the hand, as a defence against the evil eye, once recognised, a similar virtue against similar evils was attributed to similar objects. The silver hand is still sold as an earring in the bazaars of Morocco,[2] and the painted hand adorns the Greek peasant's cart. The knowledge of these charms and their manufacture is an important part of the wizard's livelihood. One of the leading topics in the great wizard literature of the Finns, collected in the Kalevala, is the fabrication of the wealth-bringing Sampa with which the wizard purchases a bride.

All the other arts of the wizard, however, must yield in interest to the one which has gained him the name of enchanter. The magical chant or incantation is a natural development of the prophetic howl. By the Finns it is called *Laulu*, and the English form of the word, lull, perhaps introduced by Finnish slaves into the nurseries of ancient Scandinavia, is still used for a sleep-inducing song. The lullaby that puts the child

[1] Both words are traced to the same root in Prof. Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*.

[2] Where I bought one in my possession.

to sleep by its droning sound, and not by any persuasion in the words themselves, is a true magical incantation in the most primitive form.

An examination of the magical texts of ancient Akkad shows that there was nothing mysterious about them, in the modern sense of the word. They consisted simply of an earnest request or command, repeated over and over again.[1] Both these characteristics, emotion and repetition, have continued to distinguish poetry to the present day, the repetition being semantic in ancient Chinese and Hebrew poetry, while it occurs as refrain or rhyme in modern European verse.

Although the incantation came later than the primitive signs and charms it fell under the same laws. It was extended from the human subjects of the wizard's power to the natural creation, as in the case of the familiar weather spell :—

> Rain, rain go away ;
> Come again another day.

The words, like the signs and symbols, acquired by long use a virtue of their own, and thus when an old language changed or was abandoned in daily life, the archaic texts were preserved for magical or religious purposes, in this way becoming occult and mysterious in the eyes of later generations. Thus the Semitic conquerors of Akkad continued to use the Akkadian spells, and Hebrew, Greek and Latin each enjoyed the veneration of medieval Europe.

> An attempt to publish the New Testament in vulgar Greek caused a riot in Athens in the twentieth century. The Roman Church owes a great part of its prestige to its use of an obsolete language, although not its original one, the Christians in Rome having

[1] See examples in Lenormant's *Chaldean Magic.*

long kept up the use of Greek, as they still do in the title of the *Papa*.[1] It is even more singular that the English upper class should believe firmly that the teaching of Latin in the public schools is the secret of the superior manners of gentlemen, although English ladies have been able to dispense with the magical inoculation. The old universities are seen struggling to escape from the spell like bewitched dreamers from the power of the enchanter.

With the rise of the belief in intelligent spirits or gods the spell tended to cast into the shade the older weapons in the wizard's armoury. At the same time it changed its character, becoming less and less musical, and more and more literary. In the Finn epic, when the wizard wishes to heal a wound caused by iron he has first to learn the spell that will give him power over iron.[2] And this spell consists of the Song of the Origin of Iron, a very different kind of incantation to the " ducdame to call fools into a circle " of the medieval sorcerer. We seem to feel the breath of modern science, and to catch a first glimpse at the truth that knowledge is power.

In the last stage of all the spell is written, as we find in passing over from Finland to Scandinavia, and from the age of Joshua to that of Solomon. A magical rune is inscribed on the sword-blade of the Viking, and the djinns tremble before the Name inscribed on the wondrous Seal. Writing is much too modern an art to be employed in witching clouds and wild beasts ; and with its introduction the history of magic merges into the history of religion.

[1] See *Christian Worship*, by Mgr. Le Duchesne, p. 301 (Eng. trans.).

" In Byzantine times the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was used, and provision was made for its being recited first in Greek and then in Latin. The population of Rome at that time was bi-lingual and the Catechumens were grouped according to their language to hear the recital of the creed."

[2] Kalwala, Rune ix.

I have seen Irish Catholics and Nigerian Moslems wearing the same little bag next the skin, containing in one case a Latin prayer, and in the other a text from the Koran. The next form of amulet is the cholera belt.

4. *The Medicine Man*

Just as the prehistoric wizard is best remembered in folklore as the enchanter or spellmaker so it is in that character that the contemporary wizard still commands the homage of his savage tribesmen. But the unimaginative English colonists who have borne the chief share in opening up the wild continents saw the wizard in a more commonplace light, and named him with reference not to his magical and visionary functions, but to that one which brought him nearest to their own experience, and to modern life.

It is as medicine-man or doctor that the wizard emerges from the dark precinct of hysteria and mystery into the light of common sense ; and it is natural for the modern mind to regard the passage from the charms and spells to drugs and practical surgery as one from the charlatan to the scientist. Yet it was the other way about. To those who have been accustomed to sneer at religion as the legitimate child of magic it must come with something of a shock to realise that science is its bastard child. The priest represents the wizard in his lawful and honourable rôle of psychical practitioner, the scientist represents him as a fraudulent trickster eking out miracle by contrivance. Modern science is the result of the wizard's efforts to cheat his clients.

The initial responsibility for this development was not the wizard's. He began with the honest exercise of a genuine faculty. He was a true

weather-prophet on occasion, and a true, though fallible, seer. There was a sincere inspiration in the lull or chant, and a sincere will in the spell. But the faith of his clients outran his natural limitations. Because he was sometimes clairvoyant he was credited with continual omniscience. Because he was potent he was credited with omnipotence. Ignorance demanded that he should become inspired to suit its convenience, and the power that cast out diseases was expected to cast mountains into the sea.

In seeking to perfect his weather forecast the wizard was led to study the flight of birds and the courses of the stars, and thus to found the superstition of augury and the sciences of astronomy and chronology. To support his character as a seer he was obliged to cultivate political science, and the inseparable art of lying. Cicero relates the humorous anecdote of a Roman admiral who, when the sacred chickens refused to eat—an omen of defeat—had them thrown overboard, with the remark, "If they will not eat they shall drink." (It is fair to the chickens to add that he lost the battle.) In order to escape a similar fate the prophet became a false prophet, and practised the art of composing oracles that could be read both ways. The embassy of Croesus could not be turned away from the Delphic shrine because the magic vapour had ceased to mount; and so the Pythoness must feign to rave while she repeated the ambiguous verses prepared by her manager—not always more ambiguous than her inspired responses.

The London fortune-tellers behave in much the same way, under the same temptation. One woman whom I tested showed considerable powers of thought-reading on the first occasion. On the second her

faculty had deserted her, and she put me off with blundering guesswork, in order not to lose her fee.

A recent writer declares that professional performers of stage tricks in imitation of thought-reading are tempted by credulous Spiritualists to pretend that their performances are genuine. Whether that be so or not, the converse is constantly true. The medium or clairvoyant seldom resists the temptation to eke out such genuine marvels as may be at his command by others which are clearly spurious.

(This almost invariable association between psychical experiments and trickery has done more than anything else to discredit the whole study. It is calculated to suggest that the exercise of these faculties is directly pernicious to the moral sense, and that the clerical ban of them is largely justified.)

A similar temptation assailed the wizard in the exercise of his healing gifts. The revival of this benevolent form of witchcraft in the present day renders it needless to insist upon the genuine character of what its modern practitioners call faith-healing. Whatever be the language used, it must be pronounced that the essential element in these cures is the faith of the patient, and that it is quite immaterial whether witch or patient may name the power at work Yahweh or Christ or Buddha. The Virgin of Lourdes and Mrs. Eddy work exactly the same cures by exactly the same means as the primeval witch.

Now if the followers of either were to supplement their magical exercises by the secret administration of drugs in cases outside the scope of pure witchcraft, they would be doing what their savage brethren do. The Pagan wizard is wiser than the Christian one, because he knows that there are limitations to his psychical power, and ekes it out by the use of drugs. He is also more candid than the civilised doctor, because he does

not disguise his reliance on language and demeanour in stimulating the nervous system of the patient. The differences between faith-healing, and suggestion, and a good bedside manner, are only differences of degree. The wizard is physician and faith-healer, scientist and Christian Scientist, in one ; and neither he nor his patients, nor the most scrupulous investigator, can determine exactly what share in the cure is due to the drug, and what to the charm.

The first pharmacopœia was put together by the prehistoric wizard by stealth. It contained hurtful plants as well as helpful ones, and the former long remained the peculiar stock-in-trade of the sorcerer. In the Roman age poisons are procured from the witch Locusta ; in medieval trials the two charges of witchcraft and poisoning are constantly combined. On entering the field of science the wizard did not become less formidable, but rather more. He still dealt death around him, dealt it more secretly and more surely than ever, and by means that seemed not less supernatural to his contemporaries. How can the magical philtre slay a strong man whom the wolf and bear cannot slay ? The whole reason of the savage, his common sense, tells him that it cannot—unless it carry the lightning of the wizard's curse.

The discovery of medicine was not the only pathway from the old world to the new, out of the magic wood into the cultivated field. It is the most distinct. Medicine became the wizard's most prized and most useful craft, and so it is as the healer that he lingers to this day, an antique survival in the midst of a religion that is fast becoming a survival in its turn, and a science that views its parent with jealousy disguised in scorn. In name and character he lives on in the medicine-

man of peasant Europe, the wise man, or, as the case may be, wise woman, herbalist, bonesetter, midwife, and fortune-teller on the sly. In France, upon her doorplate in the streets of bustling Paris, the licensed midwife inscribes her neolithic title of *sage femme*.

Magic is but a name for the first groping efforts of man to learn the nature of the world in which he lived, and turn his knowledge into power. To the first wanderers of the wild all science was occult, all art miraculous, and every craft a mystery. The first flint arrowhead was chipped to music; the shaft was winged with prayers. The spear-handle of the Pacific islander is carved with magic symbols; the musket of the Black Moor is still hung with sacred shells.[1] With what tremendous incantations did the half-naked Prometheus of the foreworld guard the gift of fire; what mystic vigils did the first vestal virgins keep about the sacred coals! The smith toiled out of sight to forge his runic sword; the masons taught the secrets of their craft with oaths and hidden rites. Every new art gave birth to a new religion. The sword was worshipped by the Scythian tribes of old; and in the twentieth century, in a land where steel was never yet made, beside the river of the Blacks, I swore the witnesses in my Court upon a bayonet.

Over all broods the spirit of the wizard. The man of genius as inventor confers boon after boon upon the race in spite of it. He braves the darkness of nature and of the human mind. Feared, hated and persecuted, he works on with the unconscious faith of his destiny; he perishes, but his work lives after him; the king of to-

[1] All over my Nigerian province I found the cowrie shell in use as a charm, as well as coin, and some flint-lock guns seized by me in a den of cut-throats were hung with these talismans.

morrow, his reign outlasts the firmest dynasties of to-day.

5. *The God*

Such is the Wizard of the foreworld, as he is revealed in literature and as he is revealed in life; a being having the outward form of man, subject to human infirmities, and vulnerable to mortal wounds; yet nevertheless something more than man, standing in some mysterious relation with forces and energies not understood by man, wielding strange powers whose limits have not been perceived, mighty if not almighty, wise if not all-knowing, *tapu* himself and able to make other men and things *tapu*, incomprehensible—in a word, divine.

Such he appeared to that first race of men that colonised Europe in the wake of the retreating ice, following the bear and wolf, and itself followed by stronger and better armed swarms that drove the hairy dwarfs before them into the fens that lay at the end of the world—the *finis* of land. Fairyland is still marked on the European map as Finland, and the Kalevala is the Bible of the Magical Faith.

Worship, in the form of awe and deprecation, is paid by primitive man to everything he fears, irrespective of any theory as to its nature. He worships the very beasts he chases and is chased by, the bear and boar, the serpent and the bull. He worships the lightning and the thunder, the earth that quakes beneath him, the flaming mountain and the burning bush. How, then, could the wizard escape worship as the Living God?

Every one of these worships has survived into historic times. During a recent eruption of Vesuvius the newspapers reported that Catholic peasants had cast aside their images and were

addressing prayers to the mountain itself not to destroy them. The living bull, worshipped in India to-day, was worshipped in Egypt down to Christian days, the brazen serpent in Jerusalem down to the days of Hezekiah. The living God, in the character of king, is worshipped to-day in the Pacific, and was worshipped yesterday in Japan; and for refusing to worship him as emperor in Rome the Christians themselves suffered death. It is only by a verbal quibble that the worship paid lately to a living witch in America can be distinguished from that paid to the Lama of Thibet.

It is not true that the history of God begins with the worship of stocks and stones, nor with the worship of the moon and sun, nor with the worship of dead men or of their ghosts; neither is it true, in the Lucretian sense, that in the beginning fear made the Gods. The worship of the living is older than the worship of the dead. Evemeros and his modern followers have overlooked the fact that men do not receive divine honours after death unless they have received some honour in their lifetime. The spirits of cowards and fools did not receive worship, but only the spirits of the brave and wise.

The first personal Gods were persons. In the beginning these Gods walked and talked with men, because they were men. They were Sons of Man and Sons of God, for the man of genius is both; he is the incarnation of the divine, and its highest revelation on earth; in him is life, and the life is the light of men; and the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not.

Thus it is that when man's eyes are lifted up to behold the heavens he sees the celestial gods in the shape of men. The Gods of mythology are unseen and mightier Wizards performing similar wonders on a grander scale. The divine epics and

scriptures tell over again the old folktales; only the part of the enchanter is taken by the God. The wizard has vanished from the *Iliad*, vanished from the Hebrew chronicle of the world, vanished from the literature of all the celestial religions, because he has ascended into heaven and become Zeus and Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The wizards of the Kalevala are the archetypes of the Elohim of Genesis.

In literature, as in music, it is the oldest tunes that stir the heart most deeply, and the greatest poets have been the plagiarists, creators not inventors. The *Pilgrim's Progress* is but a new edition of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, filtered through the Hebrew psalms into the stuff of the tinker's dream. The Fall of Troy was once told all over Europe in magic pantomime and dance, told on the northern coasts of Europe almost down to our own day. Outside the city of Wisby (Wizardbury), on the Gothic shore lies a stone circle called "The Siege of Troy." [1] The famous incident in Homer of the chasing of Hector three times round the walls of Troy reads like the reminiscence of a magical rite.

The key to this great transformation of the living Wizard into the immortal God is furnished by the oldest literature of the world, the magical and epical *lulls* of the Finlanders, first reduced to writing by Lönnrot in the form of the Kalevala. In these archaic lays, of which still older versions are extant in the mouths of Finn and Russian bards, we have revealed to us a world compared with which that of the Vedas or the Bible is only medieval, a true foreworld which all scientific history, whether of religions, of political institutions, of literature or of any other of the works and

[1] My inspection of this curious monument caused me to think it the plan or pattern of a magical dance.

ways of men, must henceforth take into account.

It is a world in which there are as yet neither kings nor priests, neither idols nor temples. There are no sacrifices, and no Gods to sacrifice to. Of the belief in spirits the first faint suggestion occurs in verbal forms that appear to refer to an indwelling soul in natural things—the iron's son, the tree's daughter—so that in this case mythology does present itself as a disease of language. But beneath these and other far later theological strata, the work of Christian times, there yet remains in unmistakable outline the aboriginal theology of witchcraft, the immemorial worship of the fens.

Banished from other parts of Europe, or driven underground, by a succession of religious waves from Asia, of which Christianity is the best known, witchcraft became identified with the folk whose seats lay round the eastern shores of the Baltic. The reputation of the Lapland witches extended to England in the times of Shakespeare. Professor Pipping of Helsingfors informed me that when a few years ago he took a Finn in his service to Stockholm, the Swedish servants in the household manifested dread of the supposed witch. (If only a coincidence it is at least a remarkable one that the last time a witch was officially employed in England was in the fen country, in William the Conqueror's attack on Ely. I found a wizard employed to assist the Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia, in the year 1907.) The Finn ancestry of the Slaves is suggested by their neighbourhood, by the peculiar *tapu* attaching to the Russian popes, and even by the word Slave, which appears to be connected with the Latin *laus*, and was probably given to the southern Finns as singers of magical lays. (Compare Lollard, from *lull*.) But we have yet to realise the extent to which the whole labouring population of Europe belongs to the same paleolithic stock.

The heroes of the wizard epic are everywhere wizards. They are at the same time divine and human, divine in their power, and human in their weakness. Ulysses is here not the favourite of Pallas; he is himself Pallas. Chryses does not pray to Apollo to avenge his wrongs by supernatural weapons; the supernatural weapons are his own. Achilles forges his own armour, and dips himself into the magical bath. Such is the character of the secondary heroes, of the wizard smith, Ilmarinen, and the wizard singer, Lemminkainen. The chief hero, called the ancient Vainamoinen, transcends in grandeur Zeus himself, since he creates the world. He is older than Zeus, for he is Chronos, the ancient of days, whose birth was the birth of all creation; he is Father Time.

The tale is told with the same confusion of thought that pervades other savage epics of creation. The ancient Vainamoinen is wounded by the arrow of a Lapp before the creation of the world. In one lay he is seen shaping the heaven and the earth, in another bargaining for his bride and taking lessons in magic. He forms the dry land and covers it with trees; he cuts down the trees and sows the earth with corn. He learns the secret of the iron, builds a magic boat and steers it, and goes through the sufferings and triumphs of all the epical heroes of folklore from Babylonian Gilgames to Hiawatha. Through it all runs the refrain of the wizard's incantation, that magical Word through which all things came into being, and nothing came into being apart from it; that Breath which moved upon the face of the waters, and said—"Let there be light."

What other theology than this could man invent?—what other has he ever invented since? In the effort to escape from the savage anthro-

pomorphism of the Old Testament modern science has tried to think of the Man Outside as a dynamo. And yet when one of the leaders of that school of thought tried to describe life, he compared it to playing cards with an unseen adversary who from time to time rapped one over the knuckles without explaining why. And that is demonism. The figuring of the Creative Strength as human strength is a necessity of the human mind, and mythology is not the disease of language but its law.

The revelation of the Divine Wizard was made by his incarnate son. The wizard epic was the work of wizards. In the night of time miserable humanity had cowered before the dragon and the buffalo as its superiors. The wizard taught man better things, taught him to overcome the brutes, and to transfer his worship from them to his teacher. The wizard proved himself to be divine by his mighty works. Man saw him ride the whirlwind and direct the storm. He felt himself swayed by their mysterious power. The Word that witched the thunder witched his own mind, and changed the shapes of all about him in the mesmeric dream. So at length when he gazed abroad and asked himself the question asked by every child, " Who made all this ? " he no longer answered, " The Old Serpent," but, " The Old Wizard."

In the subsequent history of religion the mind of man is seen alternately rising and falling, sometimes below and sometimes above the level here attained. The first consequence of the belief in spirits was to transfer the worship of the living to the dead, and thus to degrade the wizard from god to priest. With that part of the story we are not immediately concerned. Our business is with

the wizard as God, with the man of genius considered as divine, in short, with the Second Person of the Trinity in his avatar as the Son of Man.

The foregoing outline enables us to see how far the Christ of the Gospels preserves the features of the Wizard. He is divine; he is *tapu*—virtue goes out of him without his will. He is a faith-healer, using charms as well as spoken words. His curse has power to blast the fig-tree; his magic causes the soldiers coming to arrest him to fall backward. He is clairvoyant, seeing Nathaniel in his home; he is a seer, foretelling his own death. He walks on the water and stills the storm, and is urged by his followers to call down the thunder. With all these supernatural powers he is himself a weakling; miracles exhaust him; he flees from the crowd in search of quiet; he is constantly discouraged; and in the end his magic fails him, he is betrayed by one of his followers, and put to death almost without resistance.

Such is the Wizard's share in the story. We have next to consider the King and the Saviour.

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE CHILD

1. The Divine Mother. 2. Rudimentary Theology. 3. Transubstantiation. 4. The Divine Father.

1. *The Divine Mother*

THE author of the Fourth Gospel has disdained the Nativity legends that have been tacked on to the Gospel in two of its recensions. For John, the everlasting Word has come in the flesh, but that flesh is of the same texture as all humanity's. If the Word be not degraded by a mortal mother, neither can it be by a mortal father; and he sees no contradiction in describing Jesus almost in the same sentence as "son of Joseph," and "Son of God." (*John* i. 45 and 49.)

Such reverence was above the reach of the Syrian peasant, and indeed of the world in general in that age, if we may judge by an incident recorded by the historian Josephus as having happened in Rome under the reign of Tiberius. A pious but simple-minded matron was beloved by a young knight named Mundus. Unable to prevail with her by ordinary means, he bribed the priests of her favourite temple to tell her that the God Anubis desired to honour her with his embrace. With the permission of her husband the credulous woman spent a night in the temple, where Anubis was personated in the darkness by her mortal lover. On his afterwards boasting of the trick, the victim's husband complained to the authorities, and the priests were crucified. (*Antiquities*, xviii. 4.)

If such a fraud could be carried out in the high society of the chief city of the empire, it is evident that the Nativity legends contain nothing that struck their first readers as improbable or even very unusual. Whatever details were borrowed from the Buddhist or any other gospels, the belief was aboriginal.

In the crude language of their age the evangelists have symbolised a truth that has been told with more purity and beauty by Hans Andersen. The soul of the Divine Child has indeed another Father than his clay. The contrast between the Ugly Duckling and the nest he was obliged to quit is not greater than the contrast between the spiritual language of Jesus the Nazarene about his Heavenly Father, and the material language of the Catholic creeds.

For the source of this Catholic belief we have to look back to the stage when the human mind was first awakening from the slumber of instinctive life, and framing its simple explanations of the world in which it found itself. The divine tales that are found all over the world in different editions are true chronicles. We are reading the police news of the Stone Age; and the Zodiac is its Daily Mirror.[1] Once upon a time a real Crocodile devoured a real Child beside the Nile, as he still does night after night among the stars. "The Dragon is standing in front of the Woman who is about to give birth to the Child, so that he may devour it as soon as it is born." (*Revelation*, xii. 4.) It is the gossip of the lake village, retold in songs and re-enacted in the magical dance and Mystery, that has grown into the Saga of Creation and the Life of God.

[1] "The world of our folk tales existed long ago; it exists still among modern savages."—J. A. Macculloch, *Childhood of Fiction*, viii.

It is a corollary from the Descent of Man that the race must have long remained in the same state of ignorance as the lower animals about many natural operations where the connection between cause and effect is not immediately visible. Indeed the history of magic and religion is very largely the history of the wonder of our forefathers before things that we take for granted. The mind of a young child is sometimes a good index to the mind of the infant race. Two recent investigators, Spencer and Gillen, have reported the existence of a tribe of Australian Blacks who are still ignorant of the fact that the birth of a child is due to the intercourse of the sexes; and the understanding of this now familiar truth gave rise to the greatest revolution in the annals of mankind, one whose traces are yet visible in the laws and literature of every civilised people.[1]

Looking back now to that dim foreworld from which we have seen the form of the Wizard emerge, we shall discern side by side with the Divine Man the Divine Woman. For the child-bearing woman was as mysterious as the thunder-bearing man, and only less wonderful because she was more common. The birth of the child appeared to the primitive mind an act of creation, in which the Mother played the part of the First Cause; so that in many old mythologies, and in some versions of the *Kalevala* lays themselves, the world is created by a Great Mother, instead of by the Word of Might.[2]

The word sacred has the same semantic root as secret, and perhaps the same phonetic one.

[1] I hope to treat this subject more fully in a succeeding work on the Worship of Life; here I must confine myself to what is indispensable to the story of the Divine Child.

[2] Such is Lonnrot's version, not corroborated by any existing variant. See Comparetti, *Traditional Poetry of the Finns* (Eng. trans.), p. 119.

Child-bearing was an act of secret might, that is to say of magic; for the right definition of magic is might not understood. It was, like thunder-bearing, an involuntary display of might, and therefore it was truly mysterious; for the right definition of Mystery is the manifestation of strength through the agent instead of by him. On both these grounds the Child-Bearer, like the wizard, was tapu.

But at this point the likeness stops. In the tapu that protected, and among many races still protects, the child-bearer, there is no native element of terror. Whatever fear invests the Goddess has been borrowed from the Genius. The worship of the Virgin Mother is compounded of wonder and respect, of natural affection and the underlying instinct of racial preservation. The saying of Lucretius that in the beginning fear made the Gods may be opposed by saying that the Goddesses were made by love.

Among existing races the maternal tapu remains in force until the child is weaned, a period seldom of less than two years among the Nigerian Blacks.[1] If we may take their practice as a guide to primitive usage, it follows that one of the most familiar sights in the first settlements of man was that of the sacred Mother with her child hanging at her breast. Thus the Holy Family began as a group of two figures, and the Child shone only with the borrowed glory of the Mother's aureole. Perhaps it only shone in her eyes; for to its own mother is not every child divine?

Thus amid the horrors of that savage life, with its manslaying monsters lying in wait in the waters and the woods, its grim sorcerers prowling

[1] While in the country I was informed that the mother sometimes suckled her child for four years. During this time her husband is debarred from approaching her, and to this rule some writers refer as a reason for polygamy.

beneath the moon, and its ogres devouring their cannibal meal, amid all these shapes of dread there moved the tender group that has lived on to inspire the brush of Raffaele, and the worship of Catholic altars; an inspiration, doubtless, from the beginning, and a daily living-picture of love and help and pardon for mankind.

Thus set apart and consecrated in the favourable sense, the mother enjoyed an ever-growing consideration which in the end raised her to the chief place in the savage community. Her prolonged nurture of her offspring gave her an influence and authority over them which there was no father to dispute with her. As the sole stock of descent she was the head of the family in another sense. To these sources of power must be added those natural affections which are a more permanent element in human nature, and all those practical conditions of daily life which everywhere and always tend to make the mother the centre of the home. Every change in the life of primitive society, from the wandering to the settled state, from the arts of war and hunting to those of peace and cultivation, from tribal to family ownership of property, all contributed to give to the mother a position resembling that of the queen bee in the hive.

It seems in this way that the word *queen* itself, which has the same root as *begin*, acquired its present day significance. The Beginner of the kin was as yet unmarried, and thus her name has also come down in the spelling *quean*, with a less honourable sense. Both forms seem represented in the Latin by *regina* and *virgin*, with the same meanings; for it is hardly possible for an anthropologist to doubt that the Virgin was of old what she is again in Christian mythology—the unwedded Mother.

In the *Kalevala* lays, accordingly, the only figure that compares in importance with the wizard is the Queen—or, as her title has been disrespectfully translated, "the Whore, the Lady"—of Pohjola. The rise of marriage, or the private ownership of women, is already indicated in some of the lays; but the Queen of Pohjola, although she sells her daughter as a bride, has no master herself. She is the materfamilias, whose position will be described more fully in the next chapter, and her husband is barely named.

It is noteworthy that the Queen of Pohjola is introduced as a character hostile on the whole to Vainamoinen, and the guild of wizards of whom he is the chief. We feel the antagonism of the two sexes, sharpening that of the two orders. The Queen and Wizard were rivals for the headship of society, like the medieval emperors and popes, and their rivalry was only reconciled at length by the union of their claims in the Divine Child of both.

The successive steps by which that union was brought about take us back to the rise of the belief in spirits, with which we pass from magic to religion.

2. *Rudimentary Theology*

The child's fear of the dark is a healthy instinct founded in the physical effects of light and darkness on the human frame. The nerves are fed by light and pine without it, like the blood deprived of air. In addition, the night seems to bring forth active enemies of the nervous system. When we consider that the rays emitted by the sun are powerful enough to overcome the force of gravity in the case of material particles,[1] it

[1] Spherules of the specific gravity of water, with a diameter not exceeding 0.0015 millimetres, according to Arrhenius, *Worlds in the Making*, Eng. tr. p. 97.

will seem reasonable to suppose that the light-flood beats down and suspends from working some feebler currents in the ether, much as a violent rainfall interrupts the blowing of the wind. The "bugges by night" that haunt the savage and the child may not be creatures of the imagination merely, may not be only the mists and exhalations of the fen, but may be sub-material realities, like light itself; perhaps the sightless rays emitted by the earth, bursting up as a freshwater spring bursts from the sand below high water mark on the withdrawal of the tide.

While Satan's invisible world may thus deserve inclusion in scientific geography, the shapes assigned to its inhabitants have been the work of man's imagination, guided by his experience.

The simplest origin to assign for the belief in spirits is the waking sight of them, using the word "sight" for something that the seer cannot distinguish from a sensible impression on the retina of the eye, whether it be produced by external agents or internal nervous action. The Psychical Research Society has collected a mass of evidence to show that absent persons are seen from time to time by their friends, frequently, but by no means always, in the moment of the beheld person's death; and sometimes the vision or double is accompanied by a voice. The visions need not be connected with the exercise of telepathic energy. Sir David Brewster records the case of a lady who habitually saw herself.[1]

> I have twice had visions of this nature in boyhood, the forms seen being those of my living parents; one at night after waking from a nightmare, the other in the evening without any predisposing circumstances that I am able to call to mind. In the first case

[1] In *Letters on Natural Magic*, pp. 121, 128, etc.

my mother, who was asleep below, came into my room and filled my water-bottle, as she was accustomed to do after I had gone to bed. I spoke to her, and, getting no answer, took fright and went downstairs in search of her. In the second case I saw my father at the foot of the stairs as I was coming down, and he vanished as I came lower. He was in a room close by, reading a book.

In the first case my mother may have dreamt that she was doing what I saw her do. In the second my father may have heard my footstep on the stairs, and thought of me. However, we are not here concerned with the nature of such apparitions, but with their actual occurrence, as a factor in the religious evolution.

Civilised man pays less attention to these phenomena than the savage, and it may be that he is less sensitive to the agencies that produce them. Such at least was the opinion of Gerald Massey, than whom no anthropologist has ever more deeply sounded the workings of the primitive mind. He informed the writer that he had been driven to the explanation that early man constantly " saw " the spirits of his dead.

Whether that were so or no, if we multiply the record of contemporary authentic cases by savage credulity we shall arrive at a proportion considerable enough to explain the undoubted fact that this airy population was no less real to our ancestors than the inhabitants of the next village.

Primitive man was not conscious of any spiritual gap between himself and the animals about him, many of whom he reverenced or feared as his superiors in strength and cunning. It could not occur to him that they did not share with him in the possession of a soul or double ; and the same privilege was extended to the trees of the wood,

the plants of the field, and even to inorganic things, including the work of his own hands.[1]

He was guided to this indefinite extension of animism by the experience alike of dreams and waking visions. In dreamland the shadowy forms of animals are as frequent as those of men, and the latter are seen in their habits as they live. The same is true of ghosts. The buried king revisits the glimpses of the moon clad in complete steel. The ghostly armour and the ghostly raiment form part of every apparition, as much as does the disembodied spirit; and it seems unreasonable to accept one as real and reject the other. The wild man, more logical than some of his descendants, accepted both. When the war chief was laid in mound his weapons and his household goods were set beside him—*broken*, that so their spirits might be set free to accompany his in the underworld.

In thus crediting every shape with a soul the savage had only attained to the mental level of the metaphysicians, with their distinction between *species* and *substance*, or in English *outside* and *inside*. For the true God to be born in man's imagination, the early thinkers had to take the further step of distinguishing between substance and strength, or in alternate phraseology matter and motion, the strength manifested in shape and the strength manifested in action. We may distinguish the two stages of thought by calling the first, belief in souls (animism[2]), and the second, belief in spirits (spiritualism).

[1] *Primitive Culture*, by Sir E. B. Tylor, is the classical work on this subject, and should be consulted throughout.

[2] Professor Tylor, the originator of this word, extends its use to the belief in spirits generally. But distinction is not less important than comparison, to science.

The earlier of these beliefs is essentially materialistic. The soul is conceived of as the double of the body it inhabits, and within which it fits like a hand in a glove. Like the hand, it can be withdrawn from its envelope without damage to itself, and can act independently. In its free state it is a lighter body of gaseous structure enjoying certain advantages over its fleshly counterpart. Thus it can generally rise from the ground, move with the swiftness of thought, and render itself visible or invisible at will. On the other hand it does not always enjoy the power of passing through material obstacles. Like gas it is easily compressible, though it does not possess much corresponding power of expansion. It can take up its abode in another body whose rightful tenant is gone abroad, including the body of a bird or beast, and it can be imprisoned underneath the ice, or shut up in the fisherman's jar.

Some dim perception of what we mean when we say that the nervous system is the seat of vital force, may be found in the peculiar susceptibility of the soul to magical conjurations. Invulnerable to ordinary weapons, it is more readily and surely obedient to the wizard's charms and spells than is the natural man. The incorporeal shapes are held by incorporeal bonds. Thus in the long run the wizard's peculiar arts were almost appropriated to intercourse with his airy neighbours, his subjects or his masters, and so became religious in the modern meaning.

The grand difference between the soul and spirit is that the latter has no body, no earthly tabernacle to inhabit, unless one be provided for it in the artificial form of a stock or stone. Such is the obvious distinction between the souls of the living and the dead. The latter no longer resides in its former home, but wanders restless through

the upper or the under world. It may be hostile and mischievous if its wants are not attended to, and, needless to say, its power is in proportion to that which it enjoyed in life. The slave received no funeral honours, the crowd of nameless ghosts no worship. The banshee may shriek round the baron's tower; no peasant's hut is haunted. In classic Rome ancestor worship was a privilege strictly confined to the patricians, who alone were allowed by law to display family idols—the *jus imaginum*. The slaves worshipped their master's ancestors, or none. Even the sacred Queen fails to make a great figure in the spirit world. It is the Wizard, who ruled the spirits in life, who continues to reign among them after death.

Spirits are of two classes in their turn, according to their origin—ghosts and gods. The first are only promoted souls, who have lost their mortal frame, but not their mortal shape and character. The true immortals are the souls of strength in action, and have no shape but that given to them by man's imagination. The thunder is a sound, the lightning is a sudden stroke. Strength is in both, greater than in the hammer and the flame after which they are named Thor and Loke. But it is strength without shape, and the primitive mind obeyed the law of thought which still compels the scientist to offer us a working model of his conception, and to talk of molecules of gas and spheres of electricity.

Early man acknowledged life in the rocks and trees, and there was no reason why he should not think of the indefinite under such forms. The sky became the overarching tree, Yggdrasil, whose waving branches were the clouds. But strength exhibited in motion naturally reminded him of moving creatures. The spirit of the thunder was given the likeness of a croaking raven

nesting in the tree; the lightning was thought of as a blinking owl. These were the working models, the mental pictures of the strength men felt and knew, but which showed itself in no distinct shape of its own.

These working models ended their days as symbols, the picture writing of mythology. The eagle became the bird of Jupiter, the owl the totem of Athene. They were not permanent because they were not true. The immortal spirits having no shape that has ever been revealed to man, his pictures of them are the reflections of his own mind, and change with it. Man's growth in power and self-respect relegated the beasts to a lower place in his esteem; their ghosts ceased to haunt him; and as he drove them from his fields his ghosts drove theirs from the sky.

The working models that replaced the tree and raven repeated in the sky the story already told on earth. The tree became the bending Mother, the Queen of Heaven,[1] whose daughter was the Virgin Moon. The more energetic powers took masculine shape as Wizard-Gods. The earthly conflict was renewed in heaven. The Mother was the Creator, the Wizard the Destroyer—the Preserver had not yet been born on earth. The transformation of the Wizard into the Husband-Father below again changed the celestial rôles, and Saturn took Urania's place. The birth of the King, as will be seen hereafter, overthrew Saturn, and raised his son Jupiter to the throne. So the medieval heaven faithfully reproduced the Byzantine Court, with Emperor and Empress and Sebastocrator, and a whole swarm of eunuch saints, as ready as any earthly courtier to job favours and condone crimes for the bribe of a few

[1] The sky is figured in an Egyptian sculpture as a woman bending over the earth.

pounds of wax. In the nineteenth century the discovery of steam enabled man to make machines stronger and more reliable than himself, and in the true spirit of the idolater, he fell down and worshipped them. In the unacknowledged, but not less influential theology of the civilised world to-day, the divine Persons of the Christian creed have been replaced by a Universal Machine.

3. *Transubstantiation*

As soon as man had groped his way to the discovery of energy, thought of as a Man Inside all that moved in the creation, he passed on to anticipate one of the latest achievements of contemporary science, the theory of the persistence of energy. Just as we watch heat converted into pressure, and pressure into heat; just as we transfer the strength of a waterfall to an electric dynamo; so did the wizard track his spirits from one shape to another.

His crudest, if not his earliest, efforts in this field resulted in idolatry. We need not attempt to draw a hard and fast line between the fetish and the idol in practice, but the theory underlying each is distinct enough. The fetish was worshipped as the native seat of a spirit, or rather in this case a soul. The idol was man's handiwork, the home which he provided for the unseen tenant, that he might influence it with more convenience, much as he provided a kennel for the dog he wished to tame.

We may select the dried skull of the savage, or the Catholic relic, as the half-way house between the fetish and the idol. It is supposed to retain the spirit of its deceased owner or some portion of his virtue. In a more advanced state of culture it

is replaced by a waxen mask, as among the Romans, worn in religious processions by some one who personated the deceased.

Another forerunner of the idol was the stake driven into a grave to pin down an evil ghost, a practice which survived in England till the other day in the burial of a suicide. The ghost was not always successfully pinned down. It rose again from the dead in the stake itself, which was seen to bud and blossom, an evident case of the transmigration of souls.[1] Israelite legend tells us that such a stake was hoarded among the magical treasures in Yahweh's shrine.[2] In the same way the stone set on a grave for the same purpose might bring forth moss. Both stock and stone were in time regarded as the natural refuge of the ghost; and as art advanced they were carved into a likeness of the dead. The likeness was meant as a lure to the wandering spirit, like an inn sign. This was true "sympathetic magic," for, as I have pointed out elsewhere,[3] what is called so by anthropologists is nothing but sign language. The idolmaker was mistaken. It was not the spirit of the dead that he put into the idol, but his own. Raffaele can only paint Raffaele, and Michaelangelo, Michaelangelo. These gods made by human hands are none the less immortal; since a thing of beauty is a joy for ever. To-day idolatry has become a true religion. We worship Pheidias not Athene in the Parthenon; and build temples to house Velasquez and not King Philip.

[1] This is the suggestion of Grant Allen, in his *Evolution of the Idea of God*. It is confirmed by, and explains, the following notice of a still existing custom: "Over the grave they plant one particular shrub, and no stranger is allowed to pluck a leaf, or even to touch it—so great a veneration have they for the dead."—Mungo Park, *Travels*, ch. x, *April 3rd*.

[2] Numbers xvii. 8, 10.

[3] In *The New Word*.

A development from idolatry is the consecration of a building by means of a human victim. The first temple was a tomb, and in architecture as in other arts religion led the way. The virtue of the ghost extended from the gravestone to pervade the sacred fabric, and in imitation a single victim buried under the foundation gave magical strength to a whole building, or to the whole circuit of a city wall. The custom can hardly be said to have died out yet among savages, and there are many traces of it in our midst. The most remarkable is the ceremony of admission to the degree of master mason. The original meaning of their ritual has been lost by modern Freemasons, the liturgy now used by them being a medieval allegory, but an anthropologist can hardly fail to see that the candidate who goes through a pantomime of death, burial and resurrection, is personating the ancient foundation victim. We may even see in the extreme jealousy with which uneducated members of the society guard their Mystery—long since published to the world—a souvenir of days when the practice of human sacrifice had fallen into discredit, and the craft which still kept it up had some reason to be afraid of eavesdroppers.

To trace a Mystery to its barbaric seed is not to discredit the spiritual interpretations that have since been found in it; on the contrary, I hope this whole work will convince the reader that it is to refresh them. Of old the chosen victim of the mason was often his own child, as in the case of him who laid the foundation of Jericho in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest, Segub.[1] In the masonic Mystery we seem to catch a hint of a time when the Architect himself laid down his life to guard the building he

[1] 1 Kings xvi. 34.

had reared. The Masons of the spirit do so still when, separating themselves for the sake of their art from friends and family and the common joys of mankind, they breathe their life into their creation, and die that it may live. The Freemasons teach well if they teach us that nothing is well built that is not built with Life.

The Catholic word for this conversion of energy is transubstantiation, and we meet it in the form most easily understood by the savage, and perhaps the scientific, mind in cannibalism. Every meal is a scientific communion by which the strength of the bread and wine is received into the communicant. It may offend some minds to acknowledge that flesh is a more powerful stimulant than grass; but necessity is a good teacher, and the savage was not long in finding out that the meat of animals gave him more strength than did the nuts and berries which were for ages his only vegetable food. The discovery, like all his other steps in science, is recorded in his religion, in which meat is the only acceptable sacrifice.

> "It came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground a gift unto the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." (*Genesis* iv. 4, 5.)

Picking our way through the maze of totemism, of magical food-making ceremonies, of food tapus, and the magical properties attributed to certain animals, we find a general belief that the spirit of an eaten animal passes into the eater, and communicates its character to him. As meat is more esteemed than acorns, so is the meat of the lion more esteemed than that of the jackal. The bull was eaten in its own honour long before it was eaten in honour of the sun.

A feature of interest to the student of Christian origins is the importance that was early attached to the blood of the animal devoured. The belief that the soul of animals resides in the breath is preserved in the word *animal* itself, as well as in such words as ghost and spirit. It may probably be regarded as the oldest theory on the subject. But as breath is not eaten, another channel had to be sought for the passage of the mysterious virtue in this case, and so savage logic evolved the duplicate theory that blood was the seat of life. The theory of a duplicate soul has expanded in later theosophical belief in a whole series of immaterial shapes ; but that is a subject that lies outside the scope of our inquiry.

The Hebrew belief that " the blood is the life " in any case represents a view long and widely held. Blood thus came to be esteemed as a fetish having a magical virtue of its own ; it was both terrible and lucky ; the destroying angel passed by the doorpost smeared with it ; and it bestowed new life on him who was baptised in it, as well as on him who drank it. The later Jewish prohibition against the eating of blood may be considered a reaction against this form of idolatry.

The use of the word bloody as an adjective of strength, roughly equivalent to divine or devilish, has survived in the folk speech of modern Germany and England. It is bad language for the same reason that the oath by thunder is bad language. It offends the Christian ear because the folk use it in a Pagan association instead of in a Christian association. But the prominence given to blood in the religious literature of the Evangelical churches of northern Europe, and the ghastly images of bleeding hearts exhibited in Catholic shops, show that the underlying sentiment of the educated and uneducated classes is the same. One of the

things on which the German and English Reformers most insisted was the right of the laity to drink the blood of Christ.

It is by no means certain that anthropophagy is a natural practice. The same travellers who report that the man-eating tribes of the Congo are stronger and finer men than their neighbours report also that they are held in horror by them;[1] but of course that horror may spring from nothing more than fear of being eaten. Be that as it may, it is certain that the practice is of immemorial antiquity, and that it was governed by the ideas set forth above. The object of the cannibal was to acquire the strength and virtue of the man he ate, and for that reason the brave enemy, taken in battle, made the favourite "mess." When in the course of ages the old magical meal acquired, as we shall see, the character of what we call a sacrifice, the word *victim*, meaning "conquered," continued in use as the name of the devoted animal or man, a fossil testifying to a forgotten world.

The next step was from anthropophagy to theophagy, when the Divine Man was slain and eaten by his worshippers, for their salvation. We are now in sight of the central rite of the Catholic Church; but as the Christian "mass" of our day, while carnivorous in principle (*substance*), is vegetarian in appearance (*species*), it will be more convenient to consider it when we come to the story of agricultural religion. For the same reason I have passed over in this place

[1] See Schweinfurt's *Heart of Africa*, ii, p. 18. "I have no hesitation in asserting that the Niam-niam are anthropophagic, and that they make no secret of their savage craving, but ostentatiously sling the teeth of their victims around their necks, adorning the stakes erected beside their dwellings for the exhibition of trophies with the skulls of men they have eaten." On the other hand Schweinfurt says there are some N.-N. who turn with aversion from any consumption of human flesh, and they would indignantly refuse to eat out of the same dish with any one who was a cannibal.

the agricultural case of the conversion of energy.

Religious manslaughter survived in many corners of the Roman empire, and even within a few miles of the capital,[1] in the Christian era. It is therefore far from improbable that the more barbaric rite of cannibalism was secretly kept up by some of the wild tribes in the hinterland of Asia Minor, and by obscure sects in the slums of Antioch. (In the twentieth century a case was reported to the Greek Patriarch of an act of cannibalism on the part of some Bulgarian savages in Macedonia.[2]) It was in Antioch that the disciples of the new Gospel first received the name of Christians, and their marked avoidance of the name in their own writings indicates that it was given them by their enemies, and had an odious significance. The historian Tacitus, in recording their persecution by Nero, while acquitting them of the charge of setting fire to Rome, describes them as "a race of men detested for their evil practices." The secrecy with which their Mystery or Mass was celebrated in many of the churches, perhaps under the stress of persecution, tempted slander, and the worst accusations brought against them by the Pagans were corroborated by the mutual recriminations of the hostile Christian sects. Paul, in his Letter to the Galatians (iii. 1), testifies that a crucifixion pantomime formed part of the Christian ritual. In controversy and in their mutual dissensions they stood accused of devouring a newborn infant covered over with flour.

[1] The case of the priest of Nemi in the Alban Hills is the core around which Dr. Frazer has grouped his vast collection of kindred folklore in the *Golden Bough*.

[2] I have quoted this case from the official Report of the Patriarchate in the *East End of Europe*, but without vouching for its truth. It is sufficient that such a story should be credible and credited in the region.

Such charges, like the similar ones brought against the Russian Jews to-day, may be no more than memories of the past. Sallust, who reports a similar charge against the Catiline conspirators, adds in the true spirit of a historian,—"But I could never meet with clear evidence for so extraordinary a fact" (c. 23). It is incredible that any such horrid rites were perpetuated in the circles that gave birth to the Nazarene Gospel or had come remotely under the influence of its teaching. It is more probable that if any such traces of primitive Christolatry survived in the Levant, the rise of the Catholic Church was the effectual cause of their extinction. We can only regret that the Fourth Gospel and the Pauline Letters should appeal so markedly to cannibal sentiment, and that most Christian Churches to-day should cling tenaciously to language so calculated to debase the minds of those who use it to what they work in, like the dyer's hand. Unwholesome hate and love lie near together, and some Christians hate Christ more than they perceive.

The last case of the transmigration of energy, as it was observed by early man, on which I shall touch here, is presented by heredity, on reaching which we seem to step out of the past into the present.

4. *The Divine Father*

Heredity first presented itself to the savage mind as a form of resurrection. The ghost, instead of abiding in his infernal tomb, or in the teraph house, a species of dovecot erected for the souls of the just, has chosen to reappear on earth in a new body. The Australian Blacks referred to above attribute every birth to the mother's having

passed near some old tribal cemetery, out of which an ancestral spirit has entered into her womb.[1]

This is rather demon possession than divine fatherhood; but both beliefs are here present in the germ.

It was in this way that primitive man accounted for the likeness between a child and its progenitors, a likeness perhaps more regular and easily observed fifty thousand years ago than it can be after the endless cross-breeding that has gone on since. Mary Kingsley has drawn a lively picture of a family on the West Coast of Africa consulting over the new baby, and watching its first movements to decide whether it is the avatar of their departed Uncle Thomas or Aunt Jane. The ancient Greek custom of naming a boy after his grandfather points to some such traditional idea.

> In Wales, where the use of regular surnames is a recent innovation, I observed a similar usage in manorial rolls of the nineteenth century. The son of Evan Thomas appeared as Thomas Evan, and his son again as Evan Thomas.

Such is the belief that has been developed into the grand doctrine of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls, the foundation on which Buddhism rests. The entire absence of this

[1] "The natives one and all in these tribes believe that the child is the direct result of the entrance into the mother of an ancestral spirit individual. They have no idea of procreation as being directly associated with sexual intercourse, and firmly believe that children can be born without this taking place. There are, for example, in the Arunta country, certain stones which are supposed to be charged with spirit children, who can by magic be made to enter the bodies of women, or will do so of their own accord. Again, in the Warramunga tribe, the women are careful not to strike the trunks of certain trees with an axe because the blows might cause spirit children to emanate from them and enter their bodies. They imagine that the spirit is very minute, about the size of a small grain of sand, and that it enters the woman through the navel and grows within her into the child."—(Spencer & Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 330-331.)

belief and even of any reference to it, in the Christian literature is almost conclusive against the claim of Buddhism to a great share in the genesis of Christianity.

The Catholic doctrine concerning the birth of Jesus the Nazarene represents a third phase of savage thought. In the first phase the Mother was the sole creator of the Child. In the second the Child was, not the son of the spirit, but the spirit himself. In the third the spirit imitates the part played by the human father, and begets the Child. There is a vast gap between the two last notions, which are at first sight inconsistent with each other, although both seem to have been adopted in the Catholic belief. The body of Jesus the Nazarene is miraculously created in his mother's womb by the Third Person of the Trinity, and into the body so created the Second Person descends himself.

In order to understand these apparent contradictions we have only to bear in mind that truth spreads by degrees, and the logical consequences of a new scientific discovery are slowly apprehended, and still more slowly acted on, by mankind in every age. The knowledge of the common law of parentage has never driven out the belief in the soul or spirit as something independently implanted in the offspring, at least in human offspring. Neither has human fatherhood been accepted as a necessary law. The savage, and it should seem the civilised, mind is flexible enough to admit exceptions to the natural order ; and this disposition was strengthened in the savage by the circumstance that after the institution of marriage children continued to be born out of wedlock. For them the spirit world was long held responsible, but in accordance with the march of mind the spirit imitated the part played by the

human father, and the child, instead of being his avatar, was his begotten son.

Accordingly in the classical literature of Greece the idea of the divine avatar has receded into the background, where it may be faintly discerned, perhaps, in the tales of Hermes shepherding the flocks, and Apollo and Neptune labouring on the walls of Troy. In the later literature the Gods no longer live on earth. In the Homeric poems they show themselves from time to time, and they appear in person on the older tragic stage; but in a few centuries the practice dies out, and Plato is found condemning the introduction of a deity as a device arguing a lack of invention in the dramatist.

The theory of the divine avatar is replaced by that of the divine fatherhood. And it should be noted that, following the parallel evolution in true theology, the spirit father insensibly rises from the rank of a departed member of the family to that of a true god. Our folklore is barren of tales in which the part of father is played by an ordinary ghost. In the vast Pagan literature of the subject the spirit father is a celestial God; in medieval Christendom he is a demon, the frightful Incubus.

The Son of God is one of the great characters of literature and mythology, and it is needless to demonstrate the existence of a belief which meets us everywhere in ancient and modern times, in the official style of Asiatic emperors and in the genealogy of the English King.

> The superhuman pedigree of Queen Victoria from Woden was duly set out in the school history from which I was taught as a child, without any indication that I was to reject any part of it.

In the classical age the belief was popular enough to be appealed to by unfortunate girls,

although not always with success, as we may gather from the tale of Romulus and Remus. One of the evangelists naïvely attributes to Joseph a doubt which was allayed by a direct revelation to himself. Jesus the Nazarene was born under an emperor who styled himself on his coins the son of the Divine Augustus. A few centuries previously Alexander the Great had proclaimed himself the son of Zeus-Amen,[1] who was declared to have visited his mother in the form of a serpent. A few centuries later the biographer of the philosopher Plato credited him with a divine father in the person of Apollo—perhaps in rivalry with the Christians. In the face of these facts it is rather curious than important to compare the Christian legend with any other one. The ascription of divine fatherhood to Genius was a convention of the age, and to omit it from the biography of Jesus would have been as disrespectful as for a Byzantine painter to depict him without a halo, or for a Victorian printer to set up pronouns referring to him without a capital *H*. So, while the Jewish Church was busily fabricating Davidic genealogies for Joseph, and the Gnostics were adumbrating the mystic generation of the Christ from the Pleroma, the Catholics brushed both aside with a more venerable and universal creed.

[1] Better known in the classical spelling as "Ammon."

CHAPTER IV

THE KING

1. The Husband. 2. The Wife. 3. The Son of the Father. 4. The King or Genius.—Note on the Word *Genius*.

1. *The Husband*

THE story of the Divine Father, beginning before the discovery of human fatherhood, has carried us beyond that discovery. We must now return to earth and to the primitive community as we last saw it, and as it developed naturally from the Holy Family.[1] From this primitive group the Father is entirely absent. It consists of the Queen surrounded by the Kin. As we have seen to be the case with queen, the word kin, or *gens* as it is spelt in Latin, like the German *kind* (" child ") and the whole group connected with them, are physiological terms, referring to birth. The Queen is the mother of the Kin, the kindred are sprung from the same queen.[2]

The contrast is very marked between this group of words and such names as husband, father and mother, all of which are originally mere terms of domestic economy. The mother is the queen in her function as *matron*, the mistress of the household. The father is the protector or *guardian*, perhaps originally the uncle who looked

[1] That is to say, developed in the Eurasian foreworld. Westermarck, in his *History of Human Marriage*, has adduced much evidence that monogamy was, so to speak, the normal or typical pattern of primitive human society in many parts of the world.

[2] See note at the end of this chapter. Neither in Skeat nor the *New English Dictionary* is there a complete account of these words.

after his sister's children. The husband, or husbandman, whose name has been variously interpreted house-dweller and house-tiller, is in either case the *breadwinner* of the home, the servant rather than the master of the Queen.

The primitive husband may be recognised to-day in the wretched " magpa " of Tibet, the man whom a Tibetan heiress admits to her bed and board while he labours on her farm, but whom she turns adrift when she pleases.[1] The primitive Aryan household could entertain many such casual labourers, consisting as it did of a group of daughters under the roof of the house-mother. An exchange went on between these social units, the grown-up sons of one house going off to seek their fortune as husbands elsewhere, while they were replaced by foreign husbands.

On this point the witness of astrology again agrees with the witness of philology and folklore. There is no picture of a Father in that record of the foreworld unrolled nightly by the starry cinematograph. The Virgin Mother is there, and her heavenly Children ; the Man only comes into that old, wondrous Tale we call the Zodiac as the Waterman and the Hunter of the Bull.

The sign that we call Sagittarius, the Archer, is drawn as a Centaur, literally Bull-Slayer, and the old astronomers showed their poetic fancy by giving this name to the star group that by its rising, as it were, drives the Bull under the horizon. The excavations in Crete have brought to light a very ancient picture of a bull-fight, and therefore the figure of the classical centaur, a man united with a horse, is probably a tribute to the horsemanship of the ancient *toreador*. Across continents and oceans, and across thousands of years, the palm for horsemanship is still given to the *Cowboy*.

[1] See Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet.*

To this age of male inferiority or alienism, perhaps, we may trace the first distinction between the gentry and the vulgar. The *gens* or kin is the group viewed as members of the queenly stock. On the other hand the folk, or *vulgus*, as it is spelt in Latin, appears to mean a troop, that is to say the men of the commonwealth going out to war, under their folkyer—*fylkiar*.[1]

In the folkyer, or emperor, it is tempting to see the first appearance of the *king*. But it did not turn out so, and few sayings have less truth in them than that the first king was a successful soldier. The military monarch is in the most scientific sense of the words a vulgar parvenu, and the only age in which the ambitious soldier has been a standing danger to the throne was that in which the monarch reigned by a military title. The Roman empire went on as it had begun, in mutiny.

The true hero of the masculine foreworld is still the Divine Man, who is portrayed in the Zodiac as the Rain-maker. The sign of Aquarius marked in the first calendar the coming of the rainy season, or in Egypt the inundation of the Nile.[2] Aquarius is drawn as a man pouring out water from a jar, and that is the best known of magical charms—the oldest Prayer for Rain. In this way the astrologers drew the picture-book of natural science, and raised man's eyes from the Idol below to the true Rain-maker in heaven.

[1] *New English Dictionary*, under *King*. A friend has directed my attention to the Sanskrit *phalaka* (shield, arrowhead, etc.) and *varaka* (groomsman).

[2] "In the old Babylonian Sumerian Calendar the Eleventh month, that corresponding to the sign of Aquarius, was called the 'Month of the Curse of Rain.' By the Semites it was called the month *Tehtu*, 'the Month of the Inundation.' For this reason the eleventh Tablet in the Gilgames-Nimrod Epic of Chaldea, the legend chapter corresponding to Aquarius, contained the Deluge Story."—(Boscawen's *First of Empires*, ch. "The Beginnings of Literature.") In Egypt, in historical times, Aquarius fell in the three months of the Season of the Inundation.

Unhappily there are also gruesome pictures in the celestial Book, and if the Divine Man is the hero of some tales he is the villain of more. The enmity between the Woman and her seed on one side, and the Serpent on the other, has inspired many a dismal story of the prime. For it is scarcely doubtful that the Dragons and other monsters who figure in so many myths and folk-tales are in many cases wizards in disguise. West Africa still has its Human Leopards, and Europe was long familiar with the Human Wolf. The historical Lombards were credited with having in their camp dogheaded men.[1] In all such fables it is difficult to say how much was believed, and how much was meant and taken figuratively. The earliest crests were the actual grinning heads of bears and wolves worn by the savage to increase his stature and appearance of ferocity, as they are described in the *Song of Beowulf*.

The Divine Child was once devoured by real crocodiles, but it was also devoured by Human Crocodiles. Many an unhappy queen only bore her child for it to be snatched from her by the Saturnian sorcerers lying in wait to eat their bloody eucharist. The Osirian Mystery is a comparatively modern religious drama, in which Osiris has been given the part originally played by the Divine Child Horus. In the elder Mystery it was for the body of her child that the Divine Mother Isis fought, contending with the wicked Set. Such were the chronicles of the lake village,

[1] See Hodgkin's *Invaders of Italy*, vol. v, p. 93: "When the Langobardi saw the multitude of the enemy and knew, by reason of their own small numbers, they could not engage with them, they hit upon the following device. They pretended that they had in their camp Cynocephali, that is, dog-headed men. They made the enemy believe that these creatures followed the business of war with eagerness, being intent on human blood, and that, if they could not drink the blood of an enemy, they would even drink their own."

and such the tales once whispered by the neolithic mother to her children, as she gathered them about her, and warned them not to stray after dark beside the wizard's hut; when he put on his leopard skin or dragon scales and came forth seeking whom he might devour.

The word *divine* shows its ambiguous origin in many languages. In Russia *Bog* is the name of God; in Britain the *Bogey* Man faithfully preserves the lineaments of the Wizard as he loomed in the terrified imagination of the primeval nursery. It is the Mother's view of her Adversary.

2. *The Wife*

The discovery of paternal heredity, and the consequent reorganisation of society in the patriarchal group, may be attributed reasonably to the institution of slavery, perhaps assisted by the domestication of animals. While the sacred mothers of the clan continued to receive the men irregularly no such relation as that of child and father could be established, even if the physiology of the subject were understood; and accordingly we find that in primitive communities it is the mother's brother who plays a paternal part towards her children.

The women of a hostile clan, perhaps a foreign race, captured in war, were on a very different footing to the native queens. They were not the queens of their captor, but his chattels. They dwelt under his roof as servants and concubines, and they bore children to him alone. If he continued a member of the maternal household, his slave became the common drudge; and this abject position of the primitive wife is still that of the daughter-in-law in many countries of the

world. In all slave-holding societies the offspring of a slave mother inherit her status, and this must needs be so where she is regarded as their sole parent, and represents an alien stock. Thus the first recognised relation between a father and his children was one of ownership, a character which it retained among the Romans down to the extinction of their empire. The Latin word *familia* meant a man's household slaves, rather than his kindred; but among them his children of all ages were included, and he could only set a child free by a form of sale.

> It is remarkable that in a society so strongly patriarchal the ancient name for kindred, *cognati* ("born together") was still applied by lawyers to the maternal blood, while the paternal kinship were distinguished as *agnati* ("born in addition") that is to say, born outside the kin. The agnates had become in historical times the only lawful next-of-kin, yet their name bore witness to their recent recognition.[1]

The next probable step was for the slaveholders to observe the tendency of their slaves' children to take after them, and to draw the physiological inference. If in such early times we could imagine a white race making captives of a black we should not have to credit the slaveholder with much intelligence for him to grasp the secret of paternity.

But by whatever road this knowledge was reached, we may be sure that it was discovered by a man of genius, and that he imparted it to his fellows at the peril of his life. That secret history, the strangest in the annals of mankind, cannot be told here. The new truth came to shake the foundations of religious faith and political allegiance; till in the course of ages the Rights of Man were successfully asserted against "the monstrous

[1] See Gaius, *Inst.*, i, 156.

regiment of women," and over most of the world petticoat government was abolished by some form of Salic Law.

In the meantime we are confronted by the surprising but yet obvious fact that in primitive society the married woman occupied a degraded rank compared with the virgin mother. Marriage was a form of slavery, and as such it appears in the oldest marriage ceremonies. The savage bride is bought when she is not stolen, and perhaps the European wedding-ring may be the relic of a golden handcuff. The old slave marriage may be said to survive in England still in the form of slave divorce. By the English folk law, which Christianity has not entirely rooted out, a wife is transferred from one husband to another by being sold for a nominal price, such as a shilling or a pot of beer. The populace in some parts of the country are also accustomed to let their wives to one another on lease, with careful stipulations as to the property in the offspring.

> Although these transactions are not recognised by the Courts, solicitors are occasionally asked to conduct them; and I have been asked a question arising out of such a lease, in my former capacity as legal editor of the *South Wales Daily News*.

At this stage we are able to distinguish something like patrician and plebeian classes. The former are the freeborn, or according to Christian ideas illegitimate, children of the unmarried queens; the latter are the progeny of the slave wife. The former are of the pure blood of the conquerors, and therefore on the whole superior to the mulatto class. The same physical superiority still attaches in popular belief to children born out of wedlock. So far, therefore, the recognition of fatherhood has not shaken the queen-right, but rather strengthened it. The children

who are only connected with the stock through their father are in an inferior position to the *cognati*—the queen-born.

Nevertheless, the institution of marriage, once established, spread in two directions, aided by the instinct of jealousy, and the increasing regard paid to the paternal strain—we should add, perhaps, by its inherent and natural claim to be the normal state. On the one hand the women of the kin were taken in marriage, with or without their own consent; on the other hand the existing relation between the queen and her husband gradually came to be regarded as a marriage.

These developments are illustrated by the Roman Law. The reluctance of the free virgin to sink into the class of slave wives is marked in the form of marriage called *Coemptio* ("buying together"), in which the wife bought the husband at the same time as the husband bought the wife.[1] But the form esteemed most ancient by the Romans, and certainly the most venerable and patrician, was the religious rite of *Confarreatio*. In this the pair partook together of a sacred cake of flour, a ceremony by which the bride was admitted to the bridegroom's kin, and to the worship of his ancestral gods. This mass seems the true patrician marriage, and we are reminded of the husbandman sitting down to table with his mistress to eat the bread that he had grown. According to Maspero, the ancient Egyptians had

[1] See Gaius, *Inst.*, i, 111-13. The English translator remarks: "The exact nature of Coemption in consequence of the defective state of the Veronese manuscript must, however, remain a mystery." Yet he affords the clue by quoting from Servius and Isidorus the statement, apparently taken by them from Ulpian, that Coemption was "an ancient nuptial form wherein husband and wife made a mutual purchase, to bar the inference that the wife became a slave." It is no less significant that the title *materfamilias* applied to a woman who was *sui juris*, *i.e.* not under male authority, and was only given to the wife who had married by *Coemptio*.—(Poste's *Gaius*, 4th ed., 1904, p. 70.)

distinct names for two classes of wives, those who lived with their husbands, and those who were visited by them in their own homes. The first of these classes corresponds to the slave concubine, and the second to the queen.

All this time there was one member of the primitive community standing apart, who could no more accept the degraded rank of husband than the queen could stoop to that of wife. The ancient strife between the Divine Mother and the Divine Man seems to be continued over the Daughter whom the Wizard seeks in marriage. In the *Kalevala* the Queen of Pohjola imposes tasks on the wizard suitors for her daughter's hand, and finally barters her to the smith Ilmarinen in exchange for a precious sample of his craft.

Generally the divine embrace is invested with dread; Semele perishes consumed in the arms of Jove, and in the fairy tales the princess is glad to be rescued from the enchanter. Such misgivings must be those of the maiden in many a savage camp to-day as she is dragged off to the darkened wigwam of the medicine man. Yet there are some women to whose nature the mysterious, and even the horrible, makes a strong appeal. The sorcerer did not always woo in vain ; the woman wailing for her demon lover was also to be found in the lake village. To her friends she seemed bewitched ; the chemist of the foreworld found his hut besieged by customers for love potions, and he discovered drugs that are still in the pharmacopia.

However, the most honourable motive, and the one that in the end brought about the union of the Divine Man and Woman, was that which prompted the famous invitation of the Queen of the Amazons to Alexander the Great. A scrap of older history hints at the genesis of kingship :—

"And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose . . . When the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." (*Genesis* vi. 1-6.)

3. *The Son of the Father*

We are now arrived at that great world-heresy which has been mistakenly termed ancestor-worship, but which is in effect son-worship—the Religion of Heredity.

So much confusion pervades what has been written on this subject that, besides discriminating between the Worship of the Father and that of the Son, I will pause for a moment to discriminate between the two elements in the Worship of the Dead, one due to the influence of the Mother, the other to that of the Wizard.

The child's fear of the dark, and the love that moves even the tigress to snuff round the dead body of her cub, are feelings wide apart, but the actions growing out of them are so similar that we can hardly distinguish between affection and superstition. Yet there is an essential difference of motive between the loving care of the dead for their own sake, and their propitiation for ours. There is no element of *religion* in the behaviour of the savage or civilised mother who fondles her dead baby, talks to it, lays up its clothes in lavender, and plants its little tomb with flowers. Religion, as I have pointed out elsewhere, is severely practical; divine service is intended to

be reciprocal ; the wages of sin are death, and the wages of piety are eternal life.

The worship of ancestral spirits is a cult that evidently dates from the establishment of ancestry. It adumbrates a truth, and one that after long neglect now threatens again to receive too much consideration. The spirits of our ancestors are seen to haunt our veins, whether they do or do not haunt our walls and fireplaces. There is no doubt about the *karma* of the body, whatever be the truth about the soul. It is this truth that the thoughtless worshipper of Humanity denies, pretending that education can change the Ethiop's skin. It is this truth which he exaggerates into a superstition, refusing to acknowledge the Son of Man as also the Son of God.

The Religion of Heredity is the converse of Ancestor-Worship, properly so called, and finds expression in the institution of caste.

The laws of heredity are little better known to us than they were to the men of the Bronze Age ; and although we may have come to recognise that genius is seldom inherited, it remains difficult to draw a firm line between those arts and callings in which the son is and is not likely to tread sucessfully in his father's footsteps. The boy growing up in his father's house has the best opportunities of learning his father's trade, and the greatest ease in taking over his father's business connection ; and in most pursuits these advantages are likely to outweigh any personal qualifications that may be possessed by a newcomer.

To the modern educated mind the fine arts may seem an obvious exception to this rule, yet when the poet Tennyson died the Isle of Wight villagers asked if his son would now write the poetry. In an earlier age he would have done so, or rather he would have gone on revising and republishing his

father's compositions. Such is the way in which the material of the *Kalevala* has come down to us, and such is partly the history of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Hence it is easy to see that as soon as the class of wizards had acquired the sense of fatherhood they tended to become an hereditary caste, imparting their hidden science to their sons and also cultivating in them from childhood those psychical faculties which were the foundation of their power. The ancient priesthoods have been censured by democratic writers for their supposed dishonesty in concealing the truths of science from the vulgar, whom they amused with mysteries and fables. But every trade has its secrets, and the vulgar are those who cannot or will not master them. The museum of science now lies open to all mankind, but the visitors are few. He who has laboured in his vocation to enlighten those about him will rather see in the mythologies and mysteries of the past the strenuous effort of the scientific class to teach as much as the vulgar were willing to receive. In the life of Jesus the Nazarene we shall see him reduced to veil his revelation in parables, and to frame the true apology of Bishop Blougram : "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

The tendency of the wizard caste to become hereditary was strengthened by the ancestral cult. The wizard in his lifetime ruled over all orders of spirits, or had commerce with them, and he transmitted this professional connection to his son, as a doctor transmits his practice. But among the spirits with whom the son was in communion was his deceased father's, and this was evidently the one with which he might be expected to possess the

greatest influence. The more powerful the deceased had been in his lifetime, the more power he continued to wield after death, and that power was an asset that remained in the family for generations, rendering his descendants the more independent of any personal gifts. To the caprice of the paternal ghost, moreover, it became both natural and convenient to refer any failures of the son as prophet or magician, and his position was thus secured on both sides.

In putting on the character of Priest, the wizard did not thereby descend from the rank of God. He remains the Divine Son of a Divine Father, and the Son is of the same substance as the Father. Nevertheless the relationship must be coloured by its human associations. The Son is inferior in rank to his Father, and this inferiority is marked by his becoming the mediator and advocate of the people, and in the end their Saviour from the Father's wrath.

Consequently, at this point, two important changes came over the character of religion. In the first place the attitude of the son towards his father's ghost is naturally less masterful and belligerent than towards the spirit of the thunder, or the prowling vampires of the night. The spell insensibly sinks to a prayer, and the subsequent rift between the evil art of magic and the innocent and praiseworthy rites of religion begins to appear. In the second place ritual meets with a rival in morality.

A father's part towards his son consists not only in feeding and protecting him, but also in training him according to whatever notions of behaviour prevail in the clan, and in punishing him for disobedience and misconduct. The spirit father naturally adheres to the same line of action. He bestows favours on his beloved son, but he also

visits him with pains and penalties. Thus the priest becomes bound to shape his behaviour according to the wishes of the God, so far as they can be guessed, and to urge the same attitude on his clansmen. In this way the whole body of notions expressed by the words sin, law or will of God, repentance and atonement, came into being.

It has been observed by every thoughtful student, because it is self-evident, that the morality of the Gods is generally lower than that of their best worshippers, owing to the fact that they represent an older and more savage generation. The philosophic Greeks of Plato's time were shocked by the tales about Zeus which had pleased their ancestors. The English conscience of the nineteenth century was similarly outraged by the character of Jehovah, as it is depicted in the older portions of the Bible. Theologians have sought to obliterate these impressions from the past by the use of adjectives like omnipotent, omniscient, all-good and so forth ; but such language unfortunately is meaningless in itself, and the moment it is interpreted in the light of practice, the omnipotent is found unable to overcome evil, and the all-good is found patronising the opium traffic, slavery, heretic-burning, lunatic marriage, and whatever other iniquities happen to be approved of by his official mouthpiece. In every war, and in every general election, he is found on both sides ; and the gravest of all crimes is to tell the truth about him.

4. *The Genius*

The rise of a divine caste of priest-gods would have threatened the political supremacy of queenship if the two institutions had not been amalgamated in the Kingship.

The etymological sense of the word *King*,[1] like *gentleman*, is "child of the kin," that is to say clansman, and probably it was first used to distinguish the free-born from the slave-born, the child of the native queen from the child of the foreign wife. Where the royal name continued to be borne by all the members of a sacred or patrician caste, the monarch, if one appeared, was known by some name of different origin, such as *rex* or *raja*, meaning no more than ruler. In Madagascar we meet a class of husband-rulers, described by some travellers as kings and by others as prime ministers, but in any case owing their rank to marriage with the hereditary queen.

This royalty by marriage, as it may be called, was familiar to feudal Europe, where the heiress of a fief bestowed it with her hand. Guy de Lusignan obtained the crown of Jerusalem by marriage; and the name of Philip, as King of England, appears before that of Mary on the coins and in the Acts of Parliament of that reign, although the marriage treaty carefully deprived him of the regal power.

The marriage of the Divine Man with the Divine Woman tended to combine the hereditary royalty with the hereditary priesthood. If we may trust the witness of mythology there was a time when the Divine Mother married her own son, in order to invest him with the regal office.[2] In historical times the same end was reached by a marriage of the son with his sister, the legitimate title continuing to pass in the female line. This was the rule with the Egyptian Pharaohs[3] and the

[1] See the note at the end of this chapter.

[2] Husband of his Mother is a divine Egyptian title.

[3] "The marriage of the Pharaoh with his sister was not general, but became more common after the Eighteenth Dynasty (1400 B.C.), and was based on the religious tradition of the marriage of Osiris with his sister Isis.

Peruvian Incas; and we are informed that Sarah was the sister of Abraham.[1]

Another phase is revealed to us by the Russia of the eighteenth century, when the ukases of the czar still ran in his mother's name as well as his own,[2] pointing to a time when he was supposed to reign in right of his maternal descent, and as regent for his mother. The persistence of this notion may help to explain the ease with which two foreign empresses remained in possession of the throne, after their husband's death, to the exclusion of their children.[3]

Alongside of these indications of the derivation of the kingship from the queenship there is equally strong evidence of its wizard origin. Down to the eighteenth century the king of England worked miracles, the disease now known as scrofula being called the king's evil, on account of the king's power to heal it by his touch.[4] In the twentieth

This custom seems to have been confined to the royal house, and was never found among common people. Much of the popularity of this tradition arose from the fact that in Egyptian the terms wife and sister were synonymous." —(Erman, *Egyptian Life*, p. 114.) This writer's erroneous explanations illustrate the need of knowing universal history in order to understand the history of a particular country or religion.

[1] Genesis xx. 12. She is described as his father's daughter, but we have no certainty that such was the oldest form of the story.

[2] The false Demetrius inserted the name of the mother of the true Demetrius in his ukases, as mentioned in my *Secrets of the Past.* "Peter II. issued proclamations in the name of Catherine I."—Morfill's *Russian History*, pp. 180-81.

[3] Catherine I and Catherine II.

[4] In the reign of Charles II the custom reached its zenith and this monarch is said to have touched 200 people before crossing to England, and we learn from the *Charisma Basilicon* (1684), the work of the surgeon John Browne (1642-1700), that no less than 92 to 107 persons were touched between 1660 and 1682. James II also touched, but William III refused to do so, regarding it as a superstition. Anne renewed it, and on March 30th, 1714, she touched 200 persons, among them Samuel Johnson, whom, however, she did not heal. It ceased with the Brunswick House. See Dr. Pettigrew, *On Superstitions connected with Medicine and Surgery*, Section "King's Evil," 1844.

century the king is crowned over a holy stone; his breast is bared, and he is baptised with oil, as savages baptise their idols.

> Nor is that the most striking testimony to the divinity that doth hedge a king. I am informed by an actor that when a theatrical company is performing a play in which one of the characters, although a minor one, is a king, the actor who plays the part is treated with peculiar respect by his fellow-players, during the entire run of the piece, as well off the stage as on.

Inheriting his religious character from his father, and his political title from his mother, the king is thus doubly the Divine Child, and we may therefore see in his name something more than the etymological sense which it shares with gentleman. As the royal caste shrank to a single family, so did the kingly title come to be restricted till it acquired the distinctive meaning of royal child, or heir. In this specialised sense we may compare it with the old Saxon title of Child of Sussex, and Child Roland, and with the contemporary Infants of Spain. The Knave[1] of our playing cards has a similar genealogy, and is the son of the King and Queen.

In this way was developed the institution which still excites the jealous love or hatred of the greatest part of mankind.

The tapu which had once protected every mother's child was concentrated on the offspring of the queen-mother; and when her son inherited also the tapu of the wizard, the impression made on the human mind by this twofold sanctity was altogether prodigious. When the queen-born, begotten son of god had completed his political title by marriage with his divine sister, and his religious character by consecration as head of the

[1] German *Knabe*, boy.

priestly caste, he united in himself almost every title to reverence that one man can possess over his fellows. Hereditary god and consecrated priest, ruler and landowner, child and father of his people, the Genius stood forth as the core of the whole universe, the Word by whom everything was made. Well might the Mexican king take oath at his accession to make the sun shine, the rain fall, the rivers flow, and the earth bring forth her fruits in due season. He could do no less, and deserve the worship paid to him. The Turkish monarch is still styled the Shadow of God; and the last Chinese was the Son of Heaven.

From this time the character of the wizard undergoes a partial eclipse. The wizard caste sinks into a priesthood, of which the king long remains the acknowledged head. The Egyptian Pharaoh was regularly initiated in the priestly mysteries. The medieval Christian emperors were admitted to the character of deacons. The king of England is crowned in a sacerdotal costume. Henry VIII unwittingly revived the ancient prerogative of kingship in proclaiming himself Head of the Church of England. (The Stuart dogma of the divine right of kings rested on a wholly different and more dangerous principle, namely, that their office was bestowed on them by Almighty God, and therefore could not be taken away by men.)

Such a being was infinitely precious, His life and health were guarded by an etiquette so stringent that in the end it became too oppressive for the Genius himself to endure. The parings of his nails were treasured as charms; his sacred foot was not permitted to touch the ground, lest he should dash it against a stone.

A king who waited on me in my camp amid the highlands of Kabba was borne from his horse to a chair on the shoulders of two followers. For this

custom the coast negro offers the quaint explanation that the king is descended from a fish, which, of course, cannot walk, because it has no legs.

In the life of Muhammad it is recorded that the trimmings of his beard, and his spittle, were eagerly treasured by his disciples, and the Christian Gospels are not free from touches of a similar kind. But it would be idle to multiply instances of what is still a familiar feature of civilised life. Relic-worship is not confined to royal idols, nor can the promptings of superstition always be distinguished from those of affection.

The divinity that doth hedge a king, however, does not depend wholly on instinct and superstition. Society cannot well exist without a focus, if it be no more than a chairman, and the point of the social whirl receives strength from the whole circumference. A man must be base indeed who receives no elevation of soul from the cumulative reverence of a nation. When to that is added the ordinary advantage conferred by education for a particular career, it is a matter for some surprise that capable kings have not been more numerous, and that weak and worthlesss ones have so often abused the faith of mankind.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that this great and famous institution rests upon a falsehood, the source of endless sufferings to kings themselves as well as to their worshippers. Genius seldom is inherited. The true King is not born, but incarnate; not begotten, but proceeding. A physical aristocracy has sometimes been bred; an intellectual one is harder to discover in history. The happiness and progress of the species depend so much on its willingness to accept the services that genius is sent into the world to render, that it is those countries and

ages that have substituted birth for worth that have suffered the greatest calamities. The golden age of Europe has been fixed by the common consent of historians in that century when a series of five emperors, chosen for their individual merit, wore the Roman purple. The act of Marcus Aurelius, in handing over the civilised world to the mercy of the young savage whom he believed to be his son resulted in more misery than any other crime recorded in human annals.[1]

However, the crimes and follies of mankind cure themselves in the long run by their own excess; and history is little more than the record of the chastisements by which mankind has, as it were, been urged to discover and adopt better principles of government and social order. As a matter of experience, the duration of a ruling dynasty has generally been determined by the personal merit of its sovereigns.

The most venerable of known dynasties is the Japanese. For many ages the Mikados, unable to bear the crushing restraints of the sacred etiquette, regularly abdicated as soon as they had an infant son to take their place; and passed into active life as statesmen. In the end this custom developed into the rise of a military dynasty which replaced the divine one in its political functions.

Elsewhere, in the most settled of ancient societies, such as the Chinese and Egyptian, dynasties succeed each other so frequently as to show that there was always a point beyond which mankind were unable to bear the evils inflicted on them by the hereditary principle. In the modern kingdoms of Europe monarchy has been tempered by assassination. The English annals reveal that it was not until the king resigned his political

[1] It is with the reign of Commodus that Gibbon begins the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

power into the hands of Parliament that his life and throne became reasonably safe.

In a small community such as a Red Indian or Arab tribe the king's position was even more precarious. Among savages the consequences of defeat in war are so immediate and terrible that such a tribe cannot afford the luxury, indulged in by more civilised and prosperous countries, of incompetence on the part of its rulers. A mayor of the palace or subregulus[1] stands ever ready to step into the place of the king who has sunk into decrepitude.

> In Northern Nigeria this personage is commonly styled by the English the "second king." In some cases he is at once heir, deputy and prime minister of the reigning chief; while he may also be the native ruler of a district clan or village which has an alternating right to fill the throne.

It will be seen that the custom of regicide is, in its origin, something more than a superstition. It is a stern natural necessity, without which no savage group could long survive. The danger of permitting a dethroned rival to live is too obvious to need insisting on. In the South American Republics a president's tenure of office is frequently closed by a bullet, and for some centuries the execution, or at least the impeachment, of a fallen prime minister was the regular practice of the English constitution.

> An apparent exception to the general custom of regicide may be remarked in the case of Ulysses, whose father is described as living on in a private station. The explanation may be that Laertes, like

[1] The historian Freeman told me that neither he nor Green could find a satisfactory explanation of this title, given to Harold Godwinsson during the reign of the Confessor. On going out to Nigeria, I found a subregulus in every village. We may surmise that both the Franks and Saxons had the tradition of a similar institution.

Ulysses, owed his throne to marriage, and that what had really happened was the succession of Penelope on her mother's death. The whole history of the Odyssey implies that the royal right was vested in Penelope, who would have conveyed it with her hand to the successful suitor, to the exclusion of her own and Ulysses' son.

In outlining the general course of the evolution we must not leave out of sight a consideration which anthropologists are too apt to forget in their eagerness to bring system and exactness into a science which does not admit of either. Human nature, with its passions and its weaknesses, is much the same in all ages, and the personal equation has always been present to disturb and upset the course of social evolution. In the prehistoric period men acted with at least as much caprice and uncertainty as they do to-day. Then as now, the king was a rich and influential personage, and then as now life was sweet to him. It must not be supposed that it was an easy matter for a clan to overthrow and put to death its most formidable member, entrenched in all the prerogatives of priest and ruler and proprietor. On the contrary regicide must often have been a fearful deed, calling for no common courage in the perpetrators. The mob required a leader, and it could only find one in some Bolingbroke or Duke of Gloster, endowed with natural superiority over the man whom he was ambitious to replace. Such is the obvious and simple explanation of that custom which seized the imagination of the author of the *Golden Bough*. As late as the first century, within a few miles of Rome, the priest of Nemi, the living Genius of the Arician Wood, held his office by the grim and bloody tenure of homicide. He had obtained it by slaying a feebler predecessor, and he was himself liable to be slain by the first comer who should covet the succession.

With these qualifications the religious custom of regicide takes its place in the history of mankind as a recognition, however unconscious, of the first truth of sociology, namely, that sociology is a science, and government an art; a truth repudiated in the nineteenth century under the influence of the dogma of human equality.

Note on the Word *GENIUS*.

The reader who turns to the works of philological specialists for light on the true significance of words will be constantly disappointed, for reasons that I have given in *The New Word*. Thus the *New English Dictionary*, which is rather a literary concordance than a scientific lexicon, treats the word *king* as if it bore the same relation to *kin* as folkyer to folk or boatman to boat, and actually deals with *queen* as though it meant primarily the consort of a king! W. W. Skeat, in his *Etymological Dictionary*, more reasonably derives the *queen* group of words from a hypothetical Aryan root *gan*, meaning "to produce"—and even that reverses the true order, in which a feminine word must be primary. But while translating king as "son of the kin," he deliberately explains away its hereditary sense.

> "*King*, a chief ruler, monarch (E.). M.E. *king*, a contraction of an older form *kining* or *cyning*. Spelt *king*. Ancren Riwle, p. 138, last line; *kining*, Mark xv. 2 (Hatton MS.). From A.S. *cyning*, also *cyningc*, *cyninc*, *cynyng*, Mark xv. 2; Grein. i. 179. From A.S. *cyn*, a tribe, race, kin; with suffix—ing. The suffix *ing* means 'belonging to,' as in "Aelfred Aethelwulfing"—Aelfred, son of Aethelwulf; A.S. Chronicle, an. 871. Thus *cyn-ing*=son of the tribe, *i.e.*, elected by the tribe, or man of rank, etc."—(Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary*.)

Whatever may have been the original form of the word *king*, it is certain that it never can have meant "elected by the tribe," nor primarily man of rank. In the beginning, when every mother was a queen, every mother's son was a king, but the form of the word *kin-ing* suggests that it first came into use in the sense of "clansman." As the queenship shrank to a single family, so the child of the clan shrank to a single person, regarded as the personification of the clan. Thus the head of an Irish or Scottish sept is known as The O'Grady or The MacPherson.

We may now compare the series of English words of which king forms one with a similar series in Latin.

English.	*Latin.*
begin	gigno
queen	regina
quean	virgin-
kind	genus
kin	gens
king	rex, reg- (?)

In this series the Latin for king is apparently an intruder, coming out of the class to which belong the English *rich* and the Hindu *raja*. This singularity raises the strongest possible presumption that it has replaced another word, corresponding more closely with the rest of the series.

Similar substitutions meet us in other languages and other ages. Thus the Hindu Raja is probably a usurper; the warrior caste having wrested political sovereignty from the sacred Brahmins. Just such a revolution took place in Japan, where the military Shogun ranked as king in European eyes, and the sacred Mikado had sunk to a hereditary pope or Grand Lama. The Roman Rex

himself underwent a similar eclipse in historic times, lingering on only as the *rex sacrificulus*, whose most probable function was to keep up the worship of his divine predecessors.

It is entirely in keeping with the general trend of evolution, therefore, that we should regard *rex* as the substitute for an older word, more clearly stamped with an hereditary origin and significance; and that we should find that word still in use in the vocabulary of religion.

The word GENIUS fulfils the requirements of etymology and anthropology in this connection. It is customary to translate it "Guardian Spirit," and to explain it by the belief that every child came under the protection of a *genius* at its birth. But the Latin for spirit, in fact, is *spiritus*; and the *genius* was familiarly associated with places as well as persons. When we consider that every grove and fountain had its *genius loci*, we must at once reject the theory that the *Genius* was originally or essentially a spirit that presided over the birth of a child, as an ignorant guess. The true character of the *genius loci* stands revealed in the King of the Wood.

The reader of Dr. Frazer's voluminous essay on the evolution of kingship, which takes as its starting point the historical figure of the King of the Arician grove, will find the whole treatise become luminous, and the enchanted figures resume their natural shape, as soon as he pronounces the word Genius whenever the learned author has written king.

> The Romans themselves seem to have associated the word further with Juno and Janus. It is in fact one of those roots of speech whose ramifications might be traced endlessly.

Since writing the above I find that Dr. Warde

Fowler has anticipated the idea of a prehistoric revolution by which the *rex* replaced a still older "magician-king," and has even gone so far as to suppose that this change was the work of the legendary Numa. "Inspired with new ideas of the duty and destiny of the new city of the four regions, a priest-king, doubtless with the help and advice of a council, according to the true Roman fashion, put an end for ever to the reign of the old magician kingship, but preserved the magician-king as a being still capable of wonder-working in the eyes of the people." *Religious Experience of the Roman People* (1911), p. 109. This support in advance from so learned and conservative a scholar would be gratifying in any case, but in view of the fact that Dr. Fowler has approached the subject from the opposite side, in the effort to account for the peculiar character of the historical Flamen Dialis, the agreement of his inference with mine amounts to something like corroboration. The Flamen Dialis, in his opinion, represented the ancient magician-king of Alba Longa, the Genius of the Latins.

CHAPTER V

THE SAVIOUR

1. The Christ. 2. John Barleycorn. 3. The Redeemer.

1. *The Christ*

THE political history of kingship is only important to our inquiry inasmuch as it throws light on the religious character of the office, and enables us to understand that when the living gods of antiquity are styled kings, the true significance of the title is Person, the individual who carries within himself the soul or energy of the kin. The parson of the parish is the true successor of the village king as he is found in Nigeria.

From the political reasons for regicide we may now return to the religious ones. The Genius was a living idol, and his treatment closely corresponded with that of the Chinese joss, and the Catholic Madonna. Worshipped and rewarded as long as it is propitious; as soon as it ceases to fulfil the expectations of its votaries, the idol is subjected to neglect, chastisement and degradation.[1] In the same way the Genius of a primitive clan was held to account for the prosperity of his worshippers; and the decay of his powers was the signal for his replacement by a younger and more vigorous incarnation of the spirit which appeared to have forsaken him.

[1] During a drought in Sicily in 1893, the saints were severely maltreated. See Dr. Frazer's amusing account in the *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., i, 299.

Alongside of this view there persisted the older one, already explained, of the peculiar value of the divine body as food. On both grounds it was deemed inadvisable to allow the Genius to sink gradually into decrepitude. Sound policy suggested that he should be replaced before his powers had begun to fail, and eaten while his full virtue might be acquired by those who devoured him.

Under the influence of these ideas, the Genius in many ages and countries came to be regarded mainly in a cannibal light. He existed in order to furnish the clan with a magical meal. For that purpose he was bred, and reared till he was of an age to marry. As soon as the future supply of sacred food had thus been secured, he was fattened for the knife.

> Even at a later stage, when the Genius was no longer one of a sacred hereditary stock, it continued to be customary to provide him with a wife or wives during the period between his consecration and death. The annual victim in the Mexican cult of Tezcatlipoca was given four maidens, bearing the names of goddesses, a month before being slain and eaten.[1]

We have already noticed the strong opposition offered by natural instinct to bloody superstitions of this kind. As the king's political power grew and became independent of the queen's, so did his strength to resist the fate awaiting him. The first and simplest expedient that offered itself was the substitution of his own son for himself. The

[1] See Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, ch. iii : "Four beautiful girls bearing the names of the principal goddesses, were then selected to share the honours of his bed : and with them he continued to live in idle dalliance, feasted at the banquet of the principal nobles, who paid him all the honours of a divinity."

See also Sahagun's *Hist. de Nueva-Espana*, Bk. II, caps. 2, 5, 24 ; Herrera's *Historia general de las Cosas de Nueva-Espana* ; Torquemada's *Monarquia Indiana*, lib. 7, cap. 10, lib. 10, cap. 14 ; Acosta, lib. 5, cap. 9-21.

son, who had inherited his father's magical virtue, and was already destined to be the future sacrifice, evidently formed a perfectly satisfactory substitute. The change had the advantage of preserving for the service of the tribe a chief endowed with strength and courage, in the place of a weak infant.

That such an alternative was in fact resorted to is shown by the numerous legends and authentic records of child sacrifice. King Mesha on a historic occasion sacrificed his son to deliver Moab from an Israelite invasion.[1] In Scandinavian history there are two cases illustrative of the change. On one occasion a Swedish king was put to death to deliver his country from famine.[2] On another a Norwegian jarl sacrificed his son in order to gain a naval victory.[3]

However, the natural feeling arrayed against the sacrifice of a beloved child, his father's heir, was only less strong than that opposed to the father's own death. Moreover, as we shall see presently, the demand for sacrificial victims could not have been satisfied by any royal stock, however prolific.[4] It became necessary to effect another substitution, and to find less precious victims. The transition was rendered easy by two institutions both thoroughly familiar to our ancestors, but both grown strange to the English mind, slavery and adoption.

We have already seen reason to think that the family itself developed out of slavery. We must not judge this institution by the hideous develop-

[1] 2 Kings iii. 27.

[2] See Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*.

[3] See Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, ch. vi: "Earl Hakon, of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice to obtain of Odin the victory over the Jomsburg pirates."

[4] The religious harems of Syria and Asia Minor, referred to by Dr. Frazer, are not in the line of European evolution.

ments given to it by the English slave-trade, and by the special doctrine that the Black race lies under the curse of its Creator on account of an impious act on the part of one of the sons of Noah. There were no great differences of colour, blood or language between the slaves and slave-owners of the ancient world, and as the position of the son was assimilated to that of the slave, so the slave enjoyed a share of the son's privileges. A slave born in the house is frequently the natural son of his owner. In any case it is esteemed shameful to sell him except as a punishment for some grave offence.

> The Chief Justice of Nigeria informed me that a native of Bida, who had sold a slave born in his house, was summoned before the Emir, and solemnly cursed in public audience.

The position of the slave may be compared with that of the concubine, who, although not enjoying the same legal status as the wife, shares in the common life of the home on a very similar footing.

The custom of adoption is no longer recognised by the law of England. Like slavery, it is perhaps more ancient than marriage and the recognition of natural paternity. When the mother was the sole recognised parent, it was her brothers who took a particular interest in her male children, and acted as their instructors and sponsors on their initiation into the masculine guild. The Cretans of the classical age preserved a custom which appears a form of apprenticeship ; a boy on reaching a certain age was entrusted to a man who carried him off into the mountains and there trained him, as it should seem, in the craft of hunting and war. But the practice of adoption was resorted to in ancient Rome, as it is in modern

India, with a special reference to ancestor-worship.[1] It is in order to keep up the family rites, and especially to perform the funeral, and care for the ghost, of his adoptive father, that the nephew or remoter kinsman or clansman is taken into the place of son. Such a reason demonstrates how fully adoption equalled birth in its effect and consequences; indeed, among the Romans the adopted son was entirely cut off from his former kin, and could not inherit from his natural father.

In a state of society in which these ideas prevailed, it was easy for a whole series of modifications to take place in the character of the sacrificial victims. From the king to his own son, to a son adopted for the purpose, to a slave born in the house, and again a slave taken in war, or bought for the occasion, and finally to a condemned criminal—all these were fairly easy steps. The further transition to an animal does not concern us, inasmuch as in the Christian theology and ritual it is the older form of sacrifice that has survived, or been revived.

The word "*sacrifice*" is here restricted to its strict etymological sense of "making sacred." Just as the geologist can discern in the same cliff-face layers of rock that are separated in time by myriads of ages, so the anthropologist has to distinguish in the same religion, in the same rite, and even in the same word, meanings and ideas that have originated at intervals of millenniums. At this initial stage of sacrifice, all such ideas as are conveyed to the modern mind by words like

[1] See Mayne's *Treatise of Hindu Law*, ch. i: "The law of adoption has been even more successfully appropriated by the Brahmans, and in this instance they have almost succeeded in blotting out all trace of a usage existing previous to their own. There can be no doubt that among those Aryan races who have practised ancestor worship, the existence of a son to offer up the religious rites has always been a matter of primary importance. Where no natural born exists a substitute son takes his place."

sin and atonement lie far ahead. The very notion of morality as a divine law has scarcely begun to germinate. The unseen Gods are still enemies held at arm's length and forced to pass over the house protected by a smear of magical blood; rather than friendly ancestors bidden to the sacrificial feast, and invited to drink the life-giving fluid for their invigoration.

In the magical stage of culture the consecration of the future victim takes place long in advance; in known historical instances a year, that is to say, from seed-time to seed-time.[1]

> It has been suggested that this period is responsible for the year supposed to be allotted in the Gospel, for the period of Jesus's Messiahship. I can only say that I see no resemblance between the troubled and contentious lot of Jesus, and the year of the Mexican sacrificial christ, passed in luxury and the enjoyment of royal state. I have a very strong suspicion that the old writer has coloured his narrative under the influence of the Gospels.[2]

The consecration of the king was carried out in ancient as in modern times by anointment. If Massey is right in connecting the famous word *christ* with the Egyptian *karast*, we may see in this process a parallel to that of embalming a corpse. The Fourth Gospel relates that the divine corpse was coated with a mixture of myrrh and aloes "about a hundred pounds weight." At the same time the oiling of the skin was a

[1] According to Acosta, the Mexican Christ was consecrated a year in advance in some cults, and six months in others. "Meanwhile, he was allowed to eat, drink, and be merry. When he went through the streets the people came forth to worship him; and everyone brought alms, with children and sick people, that he might cure and bless them. He did as he pleased in everything, except that he had ten or twelve men about him to prevent him from escaping." Quoted by Grant Allen in his *Evolution of the Idea of God.*

[2] The natives invented things of the kind to curry favour with the missionaries. "I affirm this as an Indian, knowing the nature of the Indians," writes Garcilasso de la Vega, *Royal Com. II.*, 5.

common practice among the warriors and athletes of the ancient world, as a means of rendering the limbs more supple; in other words, it was considered a beneficial act. As such the anointing of the living king is a practice natural, and indeed scientific, in its origin, which has lingered on as a magical rite. It is the oldest variety of baptism. In the same way we find oil as well as blood applied to sacred stones;[1] and the Hindus smear the Mahadeo pillars with liquid butter. There is therefore no reason to reject the current etymology which tells us that we have in the name Christ the Greek word *christos*, meaning the Anointed. The Hebrew equivalent, Messiah, is applied in the Old Testament to the national king, as the "Lord's anointed," and the ceremony of anointing Saul and David is described in the historical books.[2]

Christolatry, the worship of a man consecrated as king or genius of the people, with a view to his subsequently being killed and eaten, may be pronounced one of the oldest and most widespread of religions. The researches of Mannhardt and Frazer have brought to light innumerable traces of it in still existing customs and superstitions of the peasantry, showing that it prevailed over all Europe in primitive times; and it survived in various modified forms down to the Christian era. The ideas associated with it, and the language in which they were expressed, have left indelible traces in the human conscience. That they were familiar to the whole populace of the Roman empire, and particularly so in the region of which Antioch and Ephesus[3] were the chief centres,

[1] Genesis xxviii. 18.

[2] 1 Samuel x. 1, and xvi. 13.

[3] The most celebrated of the Pagan cults, founded on the sacrifice of an annual saviour, are those of Adonis at Antioch, and Atys at Pergamos. Both are elaborately dealt with in Dr. Frazer's recent volume, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*.

may be gathered from the New Testament writings, which are steeped in this language, and appeal to these familiar sentiments.[1] Much of the imagery of the Christian writers is christolatrous, and the Communion ritual of the Church imitates in symbol the dreadful rites of man's dark past. To this extent Christianity may be described as a metaphysical revival of the rural religious cults of the Mediterranean, and may be said to owe its rapid spread and permanent hold on the vulgar to that circumstance. From the vast store of proofs and illustrations which have rewarded the pains of the investigator in this field, we must here content ourselves with selecting only the most remarkable.

2. *John Barleycorn*

Primitive christolatry received its most interesting development in connection with husbandry. Agriculture has been from its beginning the most important of human industries, and like all other crafts in ancient times it was a religious mystery.

It can hardly be supposed that Charles Lamb was aware that he was writing the best introduction to anthropology we possess, when he produced his tale of the origin of roast pig. In that inspired narrative the Chinese are represented as first acquiring a taste for this delicacy in consequence of the accidental burning down of a house to which a pigsty was attached. For a long

[1] The most literal expressions of the doctrine of redemption by the blood of Christ occur in passages attributed by the ancient Church to Paul. "The church of the Lord which he hath purchased with his own blood," Acts xx. 28; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Colossians i. 14; repeated in Ephesians i. 7.

time they continued to burn their houses in order to procure the delicious meal, and only by degrees did they gain courage to roast pigs at the kitchen fire. There could be no closer parallel to the history of agriculture.

The attention of primitive man, keenly on the alert for food, could scarcely ignore the superior richness of the vegetation on soil which had been dug and manured by the process of burial. Reference has already been made to the magical budding of the burial stake. And it has been suggested further, that wild grains and berries buried with the corpse to serve it as food may have been observed rising again. We know that ears of wheat, peas and other food-stuffs have been found in Egyptian graves, and the monuments of Egypt afford two striking corroborations of the foregoing suggestions. One is the representation of a mummy with ears of corn sprouting from it, accompanied by the inscription: "This is Osiris." [1] The other is a similar picture of a tree growing out of a sarcophagus, with the explanation: "Osiris springs forth." It need only be added that in the language of Egypt the word *osiris* was in popular use as the name for a mummy, thus preserving the memory of its origin through all the mythological changes rung on it by the priesthood.[2]

There could be no clearer case of that transub-

[1] See Frazer's *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, bk. iii, ch. 14: "In the great temple of Isis at Philae we see the dead body of Osiris with stalks of corn springing from it while the priest waters the stalks from a pitcher which he holds in his hand. The accompanying inscription sets forth that 'This is the form of him whom one may not name, Osiris of the Mysteries, who springs from the returning waters.'"

[2] See Maspero's *Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria*, ch. vii: "Osiris was the first mummy and from it all the others are copied"; Wiedemann's *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, ch. ix.: "The body, made into a perfect mummy, or, as the Egyptians would have called it, 'An Osiris.'"

stantiation which was a cardinal doctrine of ancient physics. The strength of the corpse was seen passing into the vegetable growth. Hence the same virtue that was acquired by eating the corpse itself could be equally acquired by eating the divine vegetation. Under the influence of this idea the graveyard developed into the ploughed field and vineyard, and every cultivated acre was long a god's acre, in which a sacred victim was interred at seed-time in order that the divine spirit might transmigrate into the growing corn and vines.

This cult may be considered as a modification of sacred cannibalism, and our evidence on the subject shows that the two things were long intermixed in practice. Man does not readily relinquish old and tried ways for new ones. There may be virtue in both ; and thus it is that magic survives alongside of religion, and religion alongside of science ; as in an army the sword and bayonet survive alongside of the rifle, and ships still continue to be built as well as aeroplanes.

From the vast storehouse of cases brought together by the author of the *Golden Bough* in illustration of his theory of a universal cult of the Vegetation Spirit, I must content myself with citing three in which anthropophagy can be clearly seen, at first combined with, and afterwards merged in the ritual of transubstantiation. The first is that of a Sioux girl sacrificed by the Pawnees of North America.

> " The chief sacrificer next tore out her heart and devoured it. While her flesh was still warm it was cut in small pieces from the bones, put in little buckets, and taken to a neighbouring cornfield. Here the head chief took a piece of flesh from a bucket and squeezed a drop of blood upon the newly-deposited grains of

corn. His example was followed by the rest, till all the seed had been sprinkled with blood."[1]

The second case is that of the Gonds of India, a Dravidian tribe, who bought or kidnapped Brahman boys (it should seem on account of their sacred descent) and kept them as victims to be sacrificed on various occasions. At sowing or reaping, after a triumphal procession, one of these lads was slain. His blood was then sprinkled over the ploughed field or the ripe corn, and his flesh was devoured.[2]

In the third case, that of the Orissa Khonds, whose name suggests a kinship between them and the Gonds, the feature of actual cannibalism is not present, but otherwise the correspondence is so close that we can hardly be mistaken in considering the Khond ceremonies to be the Gond ones in a slightly less primitive stage.

> "The flesh cut from the victim was instantly taken home by the persons who had been deputed by each village. . . . The first divided it into two portions, one of which he offered to the Earth Goddess by burying it in a hole in the ground. . . . The other portion of flesh he divided into as many shares as there were heads of houses present. Each head of a house rolled his shred of flesh in leaves and buried it in his favourite field."[3]

Here the idea of an offering to the Earth Goddess marks the passage from magic to religion, but the fertilisation of the fields remains a magical ceremony. The comparison of these and other similar cases found in the most widely separated

[1] *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 239: Dr. Frazer is here summarising two independent accounts by Schoolcraft and De Smet.

[2] *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 241, citing *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii, p. 127.

[3] *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 244, citing Major-Gen. John Campbell's *Wild Tribes of Khondistan*, pp. 52-8.

regions of the earth amounts to a reasonable demonstration that this was the normal evolution of agricultural religion. The English Shrovetide was almost certainly once celebrated in the same ghastly fashion, and the pancake was once kneaded with human blood. The feast known to the later Jews as Purim in the same way wears the aspect of an ancient Canaanite agricultural one, however modified under the influence of Babylonian or Persian culture.

It is the language of this immemorial religion that has survived in the Christian eucharist. The words " This is my body " sound like an echo of the universal liturgy of agriculture. " This is my blood " might have been spoken over the sacramental cup in every temple of Bacchus or Dionysus by the officiating priest speaking in the name of the God.

This verbal correspondence is not confined to the Communion Service. The ancient gospel of christolatry in our own island, the Gospel according to the Picts, has been preserved for us by Burns, himself a ploughman, who tells us that his ballad of John Barleycorn " is partly composed on the plan of an old song known by the same name," which he had probably learnt to sing as he followed the plough. In it, however transformed by the poet, we shall find feature after feature in common with the Christian Gospels ; the three kings from the East, the resurrection, the crown of thorns, the bowing of the head, the spear-thrust, the scourging, and finally the drinking of the blood.

There went three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
An' they ha'e sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and ploughed him down,
Put clods upon his head,
An' they ha'e sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And showers began to fall ;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them all.

The sultry suns of summer came
And he grew thick and strong,
His head weel armed wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

The sober autumn entered mild,
When he grew wan and pale ;
His bending joints and *drooping head*
Showed he began to fail.

His colour sickened more and more,
He faded into age ;
And then *his enemies began*
To show their deadly rage.

They've ta'en a *weapon long and sharp*
And cut him *by the knee ;*
They *tied him fast* upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgelled him full sore ;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turned him o'er and o'er.

* * * * * *

And they ha'e ta'en his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round ;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

Many a John, many a Pictish Ian, put to death with dreadful rites in old, forgotten times, had watered with his blood the Ayrshire furrows over which the poet blithely sang. The greatest poetry

is like that; it owes its magic to the echoes it awakes in the dark caverns of submerged memory.

> "Will no one tell me what she sings?
> Perchance the plaintive numbers flow
> From old, far off, unhappy things,
> And battles long ago."[1]

It is most improbable that Burns had the Gospels in his mind when he wrote or transcribed these verses, and the numerous coincidences must therefore be historical, and cosmical.

The three kings would seem to be the three active seasons of the Farmer's Year; the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of an archetypal trinity; and it is significant that the New Testament does not hint that the three visitors to Bethlehem were kings. They have received that rank from the popular voice of Christendom solely under the influence of some older mythology. Neither does the Nativity myth in Matthew suggest that they were, what the old myth evidently makes them, the actual perpetrators of the Massacre of the Innocents. Yet it attributes the slaughter indirectly to their arrival, and their gifts are in the nature of funeral offerings; the myrrh being brought in again on the occasion of the burial of Jesus, as we have noticed above.

The shooting up of the corn is used by Paul as a type of resurrection.[2] I have in my possession an ancient Greek gem that appears to represent "John Barleycorn" with a seed basket on his arm and three spikes rising from his cap.[3] It

[1] Wordsworth, *The Reaper*, a poem perhaps inspired by a snatch from the same hymn-book of the prime.

[2] Quotation from the Burial Service at the end of the next chapter.

[3] See cover of this volume. There may be further significance in the fact that the figure is engraved on a sardonyx or blood-stone, green with red spots. I bought it at Corfu.

would seem from this that the crown of thorns was not, as commonly supposed, primarily an instrument of torture, but a symbol. It was a religious crown, as strictly honourable in its original significance as the purple robe. In the same way, it is known that animals led to slaughter in the Pagan temples wore a wreath. The Genius of the Corn wore a wreath of thorns, or rather thistles, in allusion to his future avatar as the spiked wheat[1] or barley. In older days his wreath[2] had been woven of the corn itself.

The Greek word *akantha*, rendered "thorn" in the English versions, should be rendered "prickle," or more simply "thistle." A practical farmer told me that he had always been puzzled by the case of the seed that fell among thorns, not only because briers do not spring up annually, but also because seed that falls among them shoots higher than elsewhere. The right sense is prickly weeds. A variety of the *akantha* is the well-known acanthus, which wreathes the head of the Corinthian column; and as all such ornaments of sacred buildings were originally chosen for their magical or symbolical character, there is a strong presumption that this leaf owes its position in architectural art to the fact that it formed the crown of the living god to whom the Corinthian temple was first dedicated. As the oak was the plant of the Thunder-God, the thistle was the plant of the Corn-God. The similar association between Christ and the Ass in the Gospels and in the art of the catacombs points to the same conclusion. In modern Greek, *akantha* has become *ankathi*, and the thistle is known as the "donkey-prickle" (*goumarankatho*).

In Thorpe's *Northern Antiquities*, vol. i, p. 274, I find the following rhyme, sung by the Mecklenburg

[1] Of Asia Minor.

[2] "Leo the Egyptian says it was Isis who first wore a crown, and that it consisted of ears of corn." *Mysteries of Freemasonry*, by J. Fellows (ed. 1906), p. 136.

peasants round the last patch left unreaped on the cornfield :—

" Woden, hale thy horse now fodder,
Now thistle and thorn,
For another year better corn."

But it should be enough to point out that the thistle is the sacred plant of the country that has preserved the litany of John Barleycorn.

It is the Fourth Gospel that inserts the detail of Jesus bowing his head ; but it would not be wise to lay stress on what may be an unintended coincidence. The rage of the enemies is a more obvious touch, reminding us of texts too numerous to quote. The binding, beating and hanging are strictly on the lines of the Christian Gospels ; and the drinking of the blood presents a parallel which it is impossible to overlook.

Yet other striking parallels occur in Major-General Campbell's description of the death of the Meriah, as the christ was called among the Khonds. " As the victim might not be bound, nor make any show of resistance, the bones of his arms, and, if necessary, his legs, were broken ; but often this precaution was rendered unnecessary by stupefying him with opium."

There are two views which may be taken of the fact, no longer open to fair dispute, that the crucifixion as described in the Gospels is essentially a case of human sacrifice. One is that the entire narrative is a myth, as much so as the stories of the Nativity ; the other is, that the priestly enemies of Jesus the Nazarene took advantage of a still surviving custom among the rabble of Jerusalem, to overcome the legal difficulty that stood in the way of his execution. The writer's reasons for taking the latter view cannot be given here. It is sufficient to remark, as part of the history of the subject, that the most barbarous folk rites may

survive alongside of much later and more civilised cults; and that such rites actually did survive in the Roman empire is proved by an account of the martyrdom of St. Dasius, from which it appears that the Roman soldiers at Durostulum in Moesia, in the third century, appointed one of their number as a representative of Saturn, and put him to death at the end of a reign of thirty days.[1]

We are now upon the threshold of authentic history, but before going further it is necessary to advert to the atrocious rites with which the Christ was put to death.

I have already pointed out that the oldest form of intelligible speech is sign language; and it has never passed out of use in religion. The crossings, kneelings and processions, the dress and pantomime of priests, which have survived the malediction of Jesus, are survivals of man's primitive attempts to hold intercourse with nature. The mesmeric power exercised by the wizard was attributed to the words and gestures he employed, and hence arose the popular notion that the unseen powers could be compelled to obey by the use of certain signs and incantations, which came to be distinguished as magical. The maxim that like cures like was applied in its crudest shape, rain was conjured from the clouds by the spilling of water, and still more powerfully by the wizard's tears.[2]

In the same way a magical virtue was believed, and is still believed, to flow from the blood of the

[1] See Frazer's *Early History of Kingship*, p. 267.

[2] I must again refer the reader to the *Golden Bough* for fuller information, although Dr. Frazer, in my judgment, has missed the first part of the evolution, which is better understood by Gerald Massey. See *Book of the Beginnings* and *Natural Genesis*.

Christ. There is an awful instinct inherited from thousands of years of Pagan culture behind the gruesome phrases of our popular hymns: "The water and the blood from Thy wounded side which flowed," and "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins." When we hear language like that smiting the vaults of glorious cathedrals, the Gothic walls seem to melt away, and we stand once more on the Pictish hillside among the ring of naked savages who strike their knives into the dying Genius and smear themselves with the red ooze.

The civilised conscience must not be expected to share their joy.

3. *The Redeemer*

We have now reached the end of the magical history as distinguished from the religious. The Divine Man, having passed through successive avatars, as wizard, priest and king, is now represented by the Sacrificial Christ. The king is the hereditary Genius; the christ is the fabricated Genius. Man in his search for the Living God has wandered far from the truth when he mistakes a criminal baptised with oil for the Son of God. Already we catch a glimpse of the next act of the world tragedy, when he shall mistake the Son of God for a criminal.

The christ may be defined as the sacrificial king, the king anointed not as ruler but as redeemer. The royal title clings to him still; we shall find it written up over the head of the crucified Nazarene: "This is the King of the Jews." But it has lost its political significance. The christ-king is the representative of the nation before its offended God, the one man who dies for the people.

Although this aspect of the christ as Redeemer carries us into another phase of thought, it is so immediately connected with what has gone before that it will be best to treat it as the closing scene in the history of the Divine Man on earth.

The custom of sacrifice, in the sense in which that word is commonly used to-day, is confounded in practice with two distinct rites or usages which it resembles in its outer form, cannibalism and offerings to the Gods. The former has been dealt with in the foregoing pages. The latter may be dismissed very briefly.

Spencer is perhaps right in supposing that the first offerings consisted of food and drink placed beside the dead. Early man not having any sound criterion by which he could distinguish between death and swoon, it is probable that he should have left refreshments within reach of a fallen friend, in case of his recovery. And this would be especially reasonable in cases where death occurred on a hunting expedition, at a distance from home; or when the clan was moving from place to place. Birds would account for the disappearance of the food thus exposed, and evaporation for the liquids; so that the savage who believed in ghosts would have every excuse for thinking that the ghost had profited by his provision, even when the dead failed to return to life.

Be that as it may, there can be no question that the practice of making offerings of food and drink to the dead, and in later times to the ancestral spirits, became one of the most widespread of superstitions, lingering to this day in attenuated forms all over the globe.

The same courtesy was extended to the celestial spirits; and the Old Testament tells us with the utmost plainness that the primitive offerings

of the Israelites themselves were intended, not by way of atonement for sin or ceremonial impurity, but as gifts to Yahweh, who was supposed to receive pleasure, if not actual sustenance, from the fumes of the sacred cookery.

> "And Noah built an altar unto Yahweh, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And Yahweh smelled a sweet savour; and Yahweh said in his heart—I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." (*Genesis* viii. 20. In the Babylonian original it is the Elohim who descend and snuff up the fumes of the roast meat.) Abraham is described on one occasion as setting a meal before Yahweh, but the narrative, as we have it, is a blend of two stories, one of a visit from Yahweh and the other of a visit from three divine beings.
>
> "And they [the three] said unto him,—'Where is Sarah thy wife?' and he [Abraham] said,—'Behold, in the tent.' And he [Yahweh] said,—'I will certainly return unto thee.' etc. (*Genesis* xviii. 9. The rest of the conversation is carried on between Abraham and Yahweh only.)
>
> In the Book of Exodus, seventy of the Israelite chiefs are described as partaking of a meal on Sinai in the presence of God, but it is not stated that he shared in the repast. (*Exodus* xxiv. 9-11.)

The mummy brought in to the Egyptian feast was assuredly not brought at first as a grim reminder, but as a guest. "Remember the dead" meant, not "remember that you will die," but "remember to keep up the supply of offerings to your ancestors."

In the same way the central rite in the temple of classic Paganism was a banquet.[1] The victim, a bull or goat as the case might be, was crowned and led to the slaughter; the fire smoked on the altar

[1] 1 Corinthians viii. The entire chapter is an exhortation to Christians to refrain from attending the Pagan mass.

of the God, and the worshippers sat down together to eat the cooked meat. From such feasts the Christians were ordered to abstain by the celebrated canon against eating meats offered to idols. It is possible that the Catholic Church is responsible for the discontinuance by the English of horseflesh as an article of diet. The horse was the totem of our Saxon forefathers, who ate it in honour of Odin.

On the whole a spirit of cheerfulness and good fellowship with the God pervades this form of worship. At Athenian and Roman banquets a few drops of wine were spilt on the floor as a slight acknowledgment to the Gods.

Alongside of such friendly gifts of food we meet with offerings of a distinctly religious type. The votive offering, a reward paid to the God for a benefit supposed to be granted by him, is a common feature of Catholic religion to-day. Most travellers in Southern Europe must have seen the shrine of some popular Madonna laden with silver models of eyes and arms and legs presented to the Goddess in acknowledgment of her services in healing a diseased member.

If the Gods can be paid to do good, they can also be paid to refrain from doing evil, to their worshippers. In both respects the treatment accorded to the unseen spirit exactly imitates that accorded to the living wizard or king. The offerings made by way of averting the malice or wrath of the God are more conspicuous in the history of most religions, including the Hebrew, than the thank-offerings.

The considerations which operated to make the sacrifice of a human, and originally a royal victim, the favourite form of propitiation in ancient times, hardly require recapitulation. In the first place there was the model afforded by the parallel

usage of sacred cannibalism. The God was already credited with the worshipper's regard for royal flesh. In the second place every reason which contributed to the custom of regicide operated to make the Genius the most acceptable sacrifice. Thirdly, as faith grew in the power of the disembodied spirit, as distinguished from the power transmitted to his descendant, so the failure of the latter to discharge his function satisfactorily came to be accounted for as due to his having lost the favour of his divine ancestor. Here we come upon an alternative motive for those revilings, beatings, and tortures to which the christ was subjected. He was in some cases punished in the sight of the God for his supposed offences against that being. The clan, having thus shown their sympathy with the wrongs of the offended spirit, put the offender to death in deference to the supposed divine will; and anointed a new Genius who it was hoped might be a *persona grata*.

A fourth cause which helped to swell the current of opinion and practice, was the existence of certain wholly malevolent gods whose intercourse with mankind was practically confined to preying upon them. The crocodile, the man-eating tiger, perhaps the roc or sea-serpent or monstrous lizard of the foreworld, were all feared and revered as beings greater than man, who demanded a toll of human flesh. Innumerable folk tales, of which that of Andromeda is the best known, afford evidence of the primeval custom of exposing a representative of the clan, in the most ancient narratives a girl, in the path of a monster, in the hope of diverting him from an attack on the village. In addition to the real alligators there were also the imaginary ones concealed in the whirlpools or sudden floods that upset the fisher-

man's boat, or dragged down the failing swimmer. Each river was credited with a Genius or Nixy demanding its tribute of human life.

> " River of Dart, river of Dart,
> Every year thou claimest a heart."

This Devonshire rhyme may be the survival of some forgotten litany chanted when the annual victim was cast into the stream in the hope of contenting its evil spirit.

From such beginnings the idea of offering a human victim as a vicarious sacrifice on behalf of the clan arose and took firm root in the popular religions of the world.

The idea of sin is inseparably connected with that of disease. Many of the ceremonial rules of the Jewish, or rather Zarathustrian, code are such as medical science would recommend. The numerous washings prescribed by the Koran are not unreasonable precautions in a climate where dirt is peculiarly dangerous and public precautions against infection are rare. Religion groping its way in the dark towards the fuller light of science, is dimly aware of some connection between misconduct and unhappiness, though its guesses are too often wrong and its remedies aggravate the distress they are meant to cure.

In the nineteenth century the ruling class in England were persuaded by medical science that their own lives were endangered by the insanitary and pestilence-breeding homes of the poor. Accordingly they set to work to remove the danger by improving the drains of their serfs. We owe the Public Health Act to an illness of the Prince of Wales. Thus an enlightened selfishness did more in a single generation for the benefit of the wretched than had been accomplished by ages of

Christian preaching. In the same way mankind will one day awake to the fact that genius, like nitro-glycerine, is a danger only when it is ill-used; and the Rousseau of the future, instead of being driven to stir up revolution, will be permitted to avert it.

Sin may be defined more technically as a breach of the Law of God. Primitive man did not suffer from the delusion that that Law had been revealed to him in its fullness. On the contrary the Eden myth tells us that he believed the Gods were bent on concealing it from him; just as some modern Christians seem to have believed that their God was bent on concealing the truths of astronomy, geology, and so forth.[1]

Sin, therefore, may be committed in ignorance. The intention of the sinner has nothing to do with the question. The legal maxim that ignorance of the law excuses no one applies in its severity to the natural law.

When a clan has given offence to its neighbours by an infringement of their rights or claims, satisfaction may be made by yielding up the guilty party, as in the case of Samson;[2] and failing him any member of the clan will serve. Corporate guilt is thus a familiar conception to us all, and indeed a scientific one. A nation suffers from the misdeeds that it does not repress on the part of its members, and especially on the part of its rulers. This principle of international law is illustrated

[1] See Pye Smith's *Geology and Scripture*, p. 8. The Vatican Council held under Pope Pious IX in 1869 in "The Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Faith," promulgated the following among other Canons: "Let him be anathema, Who shall say that human science ought to be pursued in such a spirit of freedom that one may be allowed to hold as true their assertions when opposed to revealed doctrine; Who shall say that it may at any time come to pass in the progress of science that the doctrines set forth by the Church must be taken in another sense than that in which the Church has ever received and yet receives them."

[2] Judges xv. 9-13.

by the case of the Alabama, when the English were obliged to pay many millions as compensation for the negligence or malice of their government in allowing a privateer to sail from England to prey on American commerce.

When mankind came to believe in celestial Gods the relations of the tribe or nation with them followed these familiar precedents. The king was the victim at first pointed out, and he was replaced according to the process already explained in the case of cannibalism, by the royal child, the slave, the captive and the criminal. The practice of capital punishment is absent from ancient law, which everywhere left the manslayer to the vengeance of the kin of the murdered, and authorised and recommended them to accept a weregild. It must be regarded as a modification of human sacrifice. The sinner was put to death in order to purge the people from the stain of his crime, as in the case of Achan.

When in the progress of science it was discovered that the sun, and not the slain Genius, was the author of the harvest, the death of the latter ceased to be a magical and became a religious rite. The saviour died as the sin-bearer.[1] But men change their reasons more easily than their ritual, and the liturgy of the Sin-bearer contains some echoes of the antique song of Linus, the ballad of John Barleycorn.

We possess it only in a parody, as it was applied by some unknown Hebrew poet to the sufferings of righteous Israel. Yet this parody is important, because it is the earliest Christian document. The first apology for the new religion, that put into the

[1] Major-General John Campbell mentions the case of a father who had sold his child to be sacrificed by the Khonds, in the manner described above, being consoled by this assurance of a friend: "Your child has died that all the world may live."

mouth of the Evangelist of Emmaus, consisted of an attempt to show that the crucifixion had been foretold in this prophetic utterance. The crucifixion narrative in the Gospel was afterwards drawn up under the influence of this ancient strain, and hence when we come to consider it we must keep these verses beside us, and accept as most authentic the details which contradict the prophecy.

> "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of the dry ground.
>
> Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
>
> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
>
> He was oppressed and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.
>
> He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken." (*Isaiah* ii. 3.)

There is, however, a truer and deeper origin for the underlying doctrine of the Redemption, an origin older than humanity itself. Evolution is the survival of the higher type, attained by the extinction of the lower. In that sense the whole procession of bygone and departed species have been humble saviours of man, and the barbarous and savage races that have perished out of the path of civilisation have redeemed their conquerors. So also the poor and degraded in the midst of civilisation are the redeemers of the rich and mighty, and the sinner and the publican are the

redeemers of the righteous. For that reason they deserve mercy rather than vengeance, and respect in the place of contempt. Such is the great central truth enshrined in Christianity, which has preserved it amid a mass of superstitions, a veritable revelation to man.

So ends the old, old story, the story of the life of God on earth. We must now lift our eyes to the heaven, and read the Book of Life as it is pricked out in characters of light on high.

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The Discovery of the Sun: (1) The Lunar Year; (2) The Zodiac; (3) The Solar Year; (4) Elohim; (5) The Saviour of the World.

WHILE the foregoing outline may serve to render intelligible the story of the crucifixion of Jesus the Nazarene, it comes very short of being an explanation of the Nicene Creed. So far we have considered only the magical element in Christianity; we now have to pass on to the mythological. The passage is from earth to heaven, but in making it we must perpetually bear in mind that the distinction drawn in this work for the sake of clearness is little present to the mind of the unthinking worshipper. In practice folklore and mythology are confounded and confused; the myth is half the time an explanation of the ritual, and the ritual is half the time a symbol of the myth. The heavenly and the earthly parables repeat each other, as when a man stands between two facing mirrors and sees his figure pass into the depths of each in infinite reflections.

It is necessary to insist on this, because the scholars who formerly traced all religions to the solar mythology—like men whose eyes are dazed by gazing too long at the sun—have been succeeded by a school of anthropologists who seem unable to distinguish between christolatry and Christianity. The new religion may repeat the language of the old, but at least it does so in a less literal sense, as the ascending spiral repeats the same curve on a higher level. Protestants

do not in fact wash themselves in blood, nor do Catholics eat human flesh ; and however painful it may be to listen to such words, it is a lesser evil than it would be to take part in such acts.

With these cautions I must now invite the reader to thread the celestial maze in which so many explorers have lost their way, and to behold the tragedy of the Divine Man played out once more among the stars.

As we have seen already, meteorology is the mother of astrology. Primitive man shared the ignorance of the rustic who thought the moon more useful than the sun, because she shone at night when it would have been dark without her, whereas the sun only gave light in the daytime when it was not needed. A native of England, where whole days often pass without the sun showing his face, finds it easy to understand that his presence or absence was not readily connected with the difference of day and night. The savage can see light filling the sky before the sun's arrival and lingering after his orb has been eclipsed behind a hill or drowned in the sea. The cloud that hides the sun appears to subtract whatever light is shed by him from the independent brightness of the day ; and this natural arithmetic of our ancestors is embalmed in the words that distinguish *sunlight* from *daylight*.[1]

In the eighteenth century the explorer Mungo Park found the West African Blacks wholly unconscious that they were indebted for daylight to the sun[2] ; and the author of the first chapter of the Bible seems no better informed.

[1] Varuna in the Sanskrit hymns, and Ouranos or Uranus in the classical mythology seems to have been the God of Day, as distinct from the Sun.

[2] "I have never yet encountered a purely Negro race that attributed divinity to the sun." Sir H. H. Johnston, *Liberia*, ii. 1062, note. See *Pagan Christs*, by J. M. Robertson, 2nd ed., p. 171.

"And God said, Let there be light; . . . and there was light. . . . And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night."

But though the Blacks questioned by Mungo Park knew the sun only as a species of bright bird that daily passed across the sky, they had learned to make use of him in that capacity as a dial-hand, and when they made an appointment for three o'clock in the afternoon they did so by pointing to the place in the sky where the sun would then be seen.[1] The heavenly bodies, in short, were observed and worshipped as barometers or time-keepers in the first place, and as light-givers only in the second.

"Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth." (*Genesis*, i. 14-15.)

With the aid of this clue we may try to distinguish the growth of the celestial Saviour through the successive cults, each representing an advance in science, that followed without displacing each other, like successive washes of colour laid by an artist on his paper to produce a composite tint.

I. Moon worship, and the Lunar Year.

II. The worship of the Host of Heaven, and especially the twelve Great Gods of the Zodiac.

III. The worship of the Sun, first honoured as the Day Star :—

(1) As Time-keeper, ruling a Solar Year.

(2) As Light-Giver.

[1] "The Mandingoes, and, I believe, the Negroes in general, have no artificial method of dividing time. They calculate the years by the number of rainy seasons. They portion the year into moons and reckon the days as so many suns. The day they divide into morning, midday and evening, and further sub-divide it when necessary by pointing to the sun's place in the heavens." (*Mungo Park's Travels*, ch. xxi.)

(3) As Heat-Giver, and so as the Author of Life on earth, and Saviour of the world.

In this brief outline I must regretfully treat the collateral worship of the planets as a negligible quantity. I must moreover confine myself as far as possible to the celestial chart of Europe, which is in fact the solar almanac of Western Asia and of Egypt in a Greek edition.

The Chinese, the Mexicans and other races have given different names and figures to the same constellations, and some of the Signs of the Zodiac have been altered almost in historic times. The great northern star-group is known even to Europeans by many different names: Great Bear, Plough, Seven-Turners[1] (Septentrion), Churl's or Charles's Wain, and Dipper. These facts cause the symbolical value attached by Western astrologers to the figures of the Greek Zodiac to appear fanciful and superstitious.

1. *The Lunar Year*

On the great clock-face of the sky the sun plays the double part of second-hand and hour-hand. The day is measured by his transit across the sky from east to west, the year by the slow shifting of the point at which he rises from the south-east to the north-east of our horizon, and back again. The first of these movements cannot be overlooked by a child in any part of the world inhabited by man. The second, hardly seen at the equator, becomes more legible as we travel towards the pole, till it cancels the difference of day and night. The northern zone has been colonised from the tropics,

[1] *Triones* is explained as labouring or ploughing oxen by Varro (vii. 74) and Aulus Gellius, but the word is traced by modern philologists through *tero* (to turn or rub) to the same root as that of the English *turn*. The Latin and English words were both used in connection with the turning-lathe. We are in presence of another play on words: the plough-oxen turned the furrows, and the constellation turned in heaven.

and this circumstance accounts for the slow discovery of the solar powers, and affords an initial presumption that the solar year is the creation of astronomers living in the north temperate zone.

The moon is the minute hand of the celestial clock, marking the weeks, divisions of the lunar month. Language suggests that *light* first impressed the human intelligence in its most striking manifestation as *lightning*; the moon is the most variable of the heavenly bodies, and the one in which it is most easy to recognise the source of useful light. There may be Londoners, perhaps, who are not aware that in small country towns at this day the street lamps are left unlighted on moonlit nights. The farmer still looks forward to the Harvest Moon in order that he may prolong his work into the night, and we need no other explanation of the rise of a lunar year in which the counting of the moons began from seed-time. The first lunar calendar was simply the Farmer's Year reflected in the celestial sphere.[1]

In many languages the word for *month* is derived as evidently as that is from the word for *moon*, whereas neither *day* nor *year* show any such association with the sun. The Welsh word for year is connected with blowing or blooming, that is to say with the season of spring; and a philologist should be very cautious in denying any connection between the English *year* and either of the agricultural *ears*—*ear* to plough, and corn in the *ear*. Indeed the old Farmer's Year still governs

[1] See Maspero's *Dawn of Civilisation* (English ed.), p. 207: "Thot had . . . revealed to men the art of measuring time. . . . As he was the moon-god *par excellence* he watched with jealous care over the divine eye, which had been entrusted to him by Horus, and the thirty days during which he was engaged in conducting it through all the phases of its nocturnal life, were reckoned as a month. Twelve of these months formed the year. . . . Thot made of them the three seasons—that of the waters, Shait; that of vegetation, Piruit; that of the harvest, Shomu—each comprising four months.

our common ideas about the seasons. No one but an almanac-maker thinks of December as an autumn month, and the name of Midsummer Day is a perennial protest against the rectangular reckoning of Greenwich.[1]

Unfortunately the astronomers have never succeeded in making the sun and moon and stars keep the same time, and their first essay was disastrous. The clumsy calculation of twelve moons to a year is still kept up by the Muslims, with the result that the sacred month of Ramadan shifts round the seasons in an epoch of little more than thirty years; and it is only by the use of such abstruse devices as epacts and cycles and golden numbers that the Christian Church can succeed in keeping Easter as a lunar festival, as well as a solar one.

When we remember that the old astronomers were priests, engaged in teaching the farmers their business, or in other words, wise men whose duty it was to foretell the times and the seasons, and mark the lucky and unlucky days for work of all kinds, we shall see how serious this initial error was, especially for the European climate; and the evil reputation of the number thirteen may be connected with the thirteenth moon that threw the first celestial calendar out of gear.

2. *The Zodiac*

I need not repeat that the first Signs were weather signs; and many of them may have been in existence before any attempt was made to frame them in a regular calendar. But the

[1] According to Thorpe there is no trace of a solar calendar in Scandinavia before A.D. 950, and there is a definite record of its adoption by the Icelanders at that time, or a little later. See *Northern Mythology*, i. 129.

Zoological Garden of the heavens—our forefathers said Bestiary for Zodiac—was mapped out under the influence of the moon, and preserves the calculation of twelve months in the year. The sacred number of the Signs is undoubtedly reflected on earth in that of the tribes of Israel, and the Nazarene apostles. It does not follow that it was not chosen in the last case by Jesus himself, for the sake of its national associations.

The moon confines her nightly wanderings to the same belt of the heaven as that apparently traversed by the sun, so that the Zodiac has continued in use with little alteration as it was left by the lunar astronomers. Neither are the Signs as marked on the celestial chart equal in size, nor are the solar months equal in length of days. All that has really happened is that, whereas the Sign of the month was originally the star-group in which the new moon was revealed, it became that one which was seen on the eastern horizon immediately before sunrise, and in which therefore the sun might be said to appear, as an actor appears in front of a set scene.

> Only in the case of the Crab is it quite clear that the drop scene has been repainted to suit the performance. In the Egyptian planisphere this sign was drawn as the sacred Beetle, and the Chaldeans knew it as a Tortoise. The Crab is probably a fancy of the Aegean folk for the sign that marked the sun's backward movement from midsummer.

In the celestial panorama twelve great pictures silently shift across the stage, and every one is familiar with the charming fables by which the solar reformers recommended their new science to the folk. The adventures of the solar heroes, Gilgames and Hercules, are illustrated by the heavenly picture-book, but the stories themselves are often adaptations of old folk-tales or reminiscences of real exploits.

I shall please the modern astrologers, who now honour Aquarius as the Sign of the new age, by completing the history of the Rain-Maker. The Greek Herakles, when he reaches this stage in his labours, is employed to cleanse the stables of King Augeas, which he does by turning a river out of its course so as to flow through them. This is no invention of the poet. In the ruins of the Cretan palace excavated by Sir Arthur Evans I have seen the channel through which a natural stream, diverted from its bed, was introduced to flush the palace sewer. The name of the first sanitary engineer is lost in that of Herakles. So the sacred chronicles are truer than they seem. The Divine Man repeats in heaven forever his glorious rôle on earth. The Sign of the old wizard Rain-Maker became the Sign of the Inventor labouring for the health and happiness of man; it is yet the Sign of Genius pouring the stream of science through the human mind to cleanse it of its superstitions, and rid it of the foul effluvia of the dead.

Science and superstition attached peculiar importance to the starry figures that marked the quarter-days, and the Signs that occupied those four stations when the solar almanac first came into use may still be found, with certain variations, in the Assyrian sculptures, in the Pharisaic books of the Old Testament, and in Christian picture writing. The Bull, the Lion, the Scorpion and the Eagle are combined in the monster which the Persian Sun-God Mithra pierces with his sword.[1] In the astronomical monogram of the Assyrian Sun-God the Scorpion is replaced by the overlapping Sign of the Archer, and the Eagle by

[1] See Hon. E. M. Plunket's *Ancient Calendars and Constellations*, p. 64: "We find a colossal being thrusting his dagger into the body of a still more 'mystic' creature than the Bull of the Roman sculptures—a creature com-

the water-pot of the Rain-Maker.[1] The absence of any star of the first brilliance in Aquarius had caused some astrologers to turn their eyes to the bright Altair in Aquila, which hovers overhead, and so to substitute the Eagle for the Waterman as the winter Sign; but their error is reproved by the Babylonian scripture that records how the ambitious storm bird Zu stole the tablets of destiny, and sought to vie in power with the Great Gods.[2] Ezekiel has mixed up heterodoxy with orthodoxy, at the cost of dropping the autumn Sign altogether, in his vision of the Bull, the Lion, the Eagle and the Man;[3] and his Christian copyists have made the ambitious storm-bird the totem of the evangelist John.[4]

The most important of all the Signs was naturally that which led the rest, but before discussing it I must reluctantly burden the reader's attention with one more cause of chronological confusion, the difference between the sidereal and the solar year.

3. *The Solar Year*

In addition to the other celestial revolutions, the entire sidereal heaven, owing to a cause which

bining in one instance at least the attributes of Bull, Lion, Scorpion and Eagle, and frequently those of two or more of these animals."

A writer in the *Athenæum*, Oct. 30th and Nov. 6th, 1886, describing a Roman mithræum says: "Almost the whole length of the two lateral walls run two seats, and on the side opposite the door is seen a little elevation which served as a place for the usual statue of Mithras in the act of thrusting his dagger into the neck of the mystic Bull."

[1] *Ibid.*, Plate xviii.

[2] See Maspero's *Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 666: "When Bel had poured out the shining waters—had installed himself on the throne and donned the crown, Zu took away the fatal tablets from his hand—he seized power, and the authority to give forth decrees—the god Zu, he flew away, and concealed himself in the mountains."

[3] Ezekiel i. 10.

[4] Or Mark according to Irenaeus, Bk. III, ch. xi., 8.

we need not enter into here, makes an apparent revolution round the earth in a period of roughly 26,000 years. As a result the scenery of the celestial stage appears to move too quickly for the sun, and at the end of every two thousand years, more or less, the drop-scene in front of which he makes his annual bow on New Year's day has passed away and been replaced by the following Sign that had marked the previous month. This is the movement technically termed the Precession of the Equinoxes.

The four constellations that have successively served as the background for the spring quarter-day,[1] within the last nine milleniums, are those known to us as the Twins, the Bull, the Ram and the Fishes, and each of them has left its mark on Christianity, as we are about to see.

The first framers of the Zodiac worked in ignorance of this motion of the heavens, which it required two thousand years to force on their attention. Their object was to supply the farmer with a celestial almanac more trustworthy than the lunar one. They believed that the Signs kept time with the seasons, and therefore, although the year of the new calendar was in fact sidereal, it was from the beginning solar in its aims. Its quarter days were meant to fall in the middle of the four seasons, as the solar equinoxes and solstices do fall, and we may already refer to them as Easter Day, Midsummer Day, Michaelmas Day, and Christmas Day.

The old Farmer's Year had run, at least in some northern latitudes, from Shrovetide, using that name for a date halfway between Christmas and Easter. The reformers of the calendar seem

[1] The year began from other quarter-days beside Easter, in the usage of different peoples and different ages, and other Signs have played a great part in mythology. But their history is not essential here.

to have been divided among themselves as to which of the new quarter-days they should make the first, and the result of their divisions, or of their change of mind, is seen in the duplicate birthdays of the sun. New Year's Day has been kept sometimes at Easter and sometimes at Christmastide, our present usage only dating from the eighteenth century in England.[1]

> It is a well-nigh decisive argument against the view that the Crucifixion is merely a solar myth that it fixes the death of Christ at Easter, the most joyful period of the solar year. In the Mithraic religion it is the Genius of autumn who is depicted as a "Man of Sorrows," and Christmas would have been a more appropriate date than Easter for the Death of the Sun-God.

It cannot be said that the astronomers have yet made up their minds on this vexed question. The scientific Pope who shifted the New Year back from spring to winter threw all the medieval dates into confusion, in order to restore the New Year's Day of ancient Rome, whose year was opened by the Doorkeeper, Janus. The two-faced Genius of January is identified by many scholars with Jupiter,[2] also called the Rain-Maker (*Jupiter Pluvius*); and the month of January is represented in the Zodiac by the Sign of the Waterman. It may be inferred that when January was chosen for the first month of the year, or when that month received the name of January, the Sign of the Waterman coincided

[1] See Lockyer's *Elementary Lessons in Astronomy*: "The reformed Gregorian Calendar was introduced in 1582. It was not introduced into this country till 1752, in consequence of religious prejudices." The beginning of the year was at the same time altered from March 25th to January 1st.

[2] On this point Dr. Warde Fowler differs from Dr. Frazer, but neither seems to have considered the astronomy of the subject.

with the winter solstice; and that the Italic people who framed this particular almanac were actuated by reverence for the ancient Thunder God of Europe, who thus maintained his old pre-eminence in heaven as Father of the twelve Great Gods.

The general disposition, however, seems to have been in favour of Easter rather than Christmas, as the beginning of the solar year. Eastertide may be viewed as the Shrovetide of the reformed calendar, and the hot-cross bun as an astronomical pancake. Accordingly we seem to find an equivalent of the Roman Mr. Facing-both-ways in the Sign of the Twins, which coincided with the spring equinox at a slightly earlier period than Aquarius with the winter solstice.

In one delineation of this Sign the Twins are depicted sitting face to face in a small tomblike cell, suggestive of the foundation victims of masonry. The Akkadians had two names for the month marked by this Sign, one meaning "twins," and the other "of bricks." All these coincidences may point to the foundation of the year, perhaps to the foundation of the Zodiac.

> The duality of what is called the universe is manifested in many natural phenomena, and the Heavenly Twins, met elsewhere as the mortal Castor and immortal Pollux, may have been used as types of Night and Day, of the waxing and waning moon, and of the ebb and flow of the ocean tides. But in the Zodiac they can only fitly represent Winter and Summer, facing each other at the equinox.

In whatever way the Sign may have been figured by the astronomers, and with whatever mystical allusions, its true character is anthropological. It is older than the solar year, because it is a reflection in the heavens of an earthly

Mystery. The framers of the new almanac found it already in the sky, whence it had looked down for ages upon the bloody rites of Shrovetide. The Heavenly Twain have died and lived on earth from time immemorial. They are the king and second king of Nigeria, they are the two kings of Brentford, they are Haman and Mordecai, Jesus the Nazarene and Barabbas.

We have already traced the origin and growth of religious homicide in its purely mundane aspect. We have seen the Genius of the Corn in his first humble avatar as the Husbandman—the transitory Husband of the Queen. We have seen the husband replaced by the Divine Son. And we have remarked the various motives which contributed to the sacrifice at first of the king in person, and afterwards of a royal substitute, for the good of the people. The general custom of regicide coalesced with the particular custom of agricultural homicide. A Genius was annually anointed and put to death, in the double character of sin-bearer and spirit of the seed.

But while this is an explanation of the part played by Jesus on Calvary it does not account for Barabbas. His history also begins in magic, but he represents the living Genius, the Prince of Life. He is the King who formerly stepped into the place of the slain, and succeeded him as Husband and vicegerent of the Queen.

As soon as regicide became an annual custom, or in other words, as soon as a Genius was demanded as the most acceptable sacrifice, the principle of substitution was naturally extended to the second king. In some cases the Genius was chosen a year in advance, and enjoyed his brief religious reign before succeeding his predecessor on the sacrificial altar. During this time he impersonated the life of the clan, sometimes

thought of as its ancestral spirit, of whom he was the incarnation. He made the sun shine and the rivers fall, and ruled over nature in pantomime like the wizard of the foreworld. In other cases the reign of the Mordecai seems to have been briefer, and we find a Genius anointed at seed-time and sacrificed at harvest. The reign of the Saturnian king noticed above was limited to thirty days. But whatever his tenure of office the consecrated victim was credited with miraculous powers and received the worship due to a living God.[1]

Such was the custom which met the lawgiver of the solar calendar, and it is probable that it had been already recorded in the Sign which presided over the sowing of the Aryan fields. Be that as it may, the astrological reformer was quick to see in the two Genii, dedicated to Death and Life, the types of Winter and Summer, or the dying and the living Year.

In those characters they continued to play their parts on earth as before, but with a lessened glory, owing to their having sunk from the rank of deities to that of actors in a Mystery. In the eyes of the vulgar, perhaps, the village Barabbas still helped the sun to shine, and the death of the rustic Jesus wiped away their sins. In those of the learned, the Barabbas was a strolling player, and the Jesus a common criminal whose execution made a holiday for the rabble. To put the Nazarene prophet to death in the character of "King of the Jews," must therefore have seemed a politic stroke to Caiaphas. It reduced his victim to the level of a Guy Fawkes, and the mixture of shame and indignation felt by the first evangelists

[1] See the preceding chapter. Prescott summarises the accounts of the Mexican cults in Spanish writers in the Introduction to his *History of the Conquest of Mexico.*

on the subject of the Master's death is plainly visible in the Acts of the Apostles (ii. 23, etc.), and elsewhere.

The month of the ploughing ox naturally comes next before that of the Genii of the seed. About the year 4500 B.C.[1] the first stars of the Bull caught up the dilatory sun at Easter Day, and to this period may be assigned the final recognition of the sun as the only timekeeper entitled to the farmer's faith—the one true God.

The discovery did not at once, nor of necessity, involve the dismissal of the older Gods from the celestial pantheon. Monotheism has been a plant of slow growth. The heavenly King long remained a Child. He was reborn each year as the Divine Babe, and laid in the manger of the Bull. He was worshipped as the Golden Calf. His strength was seen to wax and wane as he made his annual transit through the Signs, from south to north and back again. To what could this be due but to the influence of the Signs? The elder Gods retained their secret might, and to their friendship or enmity were attributed the sun's birth and growth, his death and resurrection.

During the great Age of the Bull, which lasted roughly to 2400 B.C., his image was stamped too firmly on the human mind as that of the Genius of the sun for it to be effaced by the succeeding Sign of the Ram. We may put it in another way that, as the Bull had been a sacred animal before his Sign was in the ascendant, so he remained sacred afterwards. As often in the history of religion, the form outlived the meaning, and the Idol was

[1] These precessional dates can only be fixed roughly as a matter of calculation, but the reader will find much valuable guidance on the subject in Miss Plunket's work, *Ancient Calendars and Constellations*. See the Astronomer Royal's letter, on p. 152.

worshipped for its own sake. The brazen Bull, or bull-headed King—(Melek or Moloch is the title in Syrian speech)—continued to reign in the Phœnician temples, and the living bull Apis to be the greatest of the animal Gods of Egypt, right through the whole Age of the Ram.

As the Bull had engendered a Divine Calf, so did the Ram beget the Lamb of God. The Jewish feast of the Passover, among its other features, some of them archaic and some mythical, shows the influence of this astrological type. The Paschal Lamb was eaten at Easter, that is to say when the sun passed over, or made his crossing, from the southern to the northern tropic.

> To these associations we may trace what seems to me the chronological error of fixing the crucifixion of Jesus at this feast, instead of at Purim. The two fell near together, like our Shrovetide and Easter. But it is possible that the old rite had been transferred to the new quarter-day.

Yet the Ram has made a fainter mark on history than the Bull; and the Fish, which succeeded to the Ram two or three hundred years before our vulgar era, has made still less. The name of Divine Fish, applied to Christ by the early Church, has passed out of use so completely that it would sound quaint if not indecorous in most Christian ears to-day.[1]

Astrology itself was obsolete. In the night of the Dark Ages the very stars were lost, and their place taken by the Greek picture-book; so that

[1] All students of Christian origins are familiar with the importance attached to the sacred anagram, in which the initials of the Master's name, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour," were made to spell the Greek word for fish (*Icthys*). A fish drawn on the ground served as a masonic sign between the initiates of the new sect. In the eyes of many Gnostic and Agnostic writers, the whole Galilean scenery in the Gospels was invented in the same vein of mythical allusion. See Gerald Massey's *Book of the Beginnings* and *Natural Genesis*.

the almanac-maker of to-day goes on blindly printing Aries where he ought to print Pisces or Aquarius. The old chart of heaven is no longer true; the holy scripture is out of date, and the vision needs revision.

4. *Elohim*

The recognition of the sun as Genius of the year was accompanied or followed by his recognition as the supreme Genius of Light. From his modest rank as one of the seven planets, and as the greater light that ruled the day, he was exalted to be chief of the celestial hosts, the Lord God of Sabaoth.

> Hitherto this rank had been held by the planet Saturn, whose remote orbit closed the circle of the planets and the days of the week. "To put an end to" is the meaning of the Hebrew word *sabbath*, and it is easy to see how the likeness between this word and *sebaoth* (meaning "hosts") has helped to confuse the Christian mind, and cause the observances of the Day of Rest to be transferred to the Lord's Day. (The Sabbath rest originated in the same order of ideas as the superstition that it is unlucky to go to sea on Friday.)

Whatever be the true etymology of the Babylonian word *elohim*, a question to which Semitic scholarship has not yet found an answer, it is admittedly the plural of *el*, which had come to mean a god; and in view of the fact that the cuneiform sign for a god is a star, we may be allowed to treat the elohim as primarily the heavenly host, as distinguished from the gods of terrene birth. We may contrast the stars with the kings, the heaven-born with the earth-born Gods, the divine and human natures of the Christ.

The introduction of this plural name into Hebrew with a monotheistic meaning points to the elevation of Yahweh from the status of a tribal and national God, to a universal one, under astrological influences.

The story of the religion of Light is too long to be written as an episode in the life of the Divine Man. I must content myself with indicating briefly that the classical as well as the Baltic mythology is still under the influence of the old weather cult, in which lightning received more reverence than the celestial orbs. Although the Sun-God enjoyed honour among the Hellenes, he plays a very inferior part on Olympus to the Thunderer, Zeus. In short, we must regard him, whether under the name of Helios or Phoibos or Apollo, as essentially the Day Star, rather than Genius of the Year and King of Heaven.

The Sun-God is described by Homer as an Archer, twanging a silver bow, and scattering his beams in the form of arrows. We shall find him invested with the same symbols on his first appearance as chief God in the Assyrian pantheon, the Great God Assur.

The change in his character, that is to say the recognition of the Genius of the Day as also Genius of the Year, is marked by the addition of other Zodiacal emblems, representing the seasons or quarters of the year. A standard of King Sargon depicts the national God as a Genius drawing a bow with an arrow. His head emerges from a circle which contains two streams of Water, two Bulls, two Lions' heads, and two Eagles' wings, and the symbolism is repeated below in a Water-jar and heads partly leonine and partly bovine.

The Hon. Emmeline Plunket (in whose *Ancient Calendars and Constellations* the standard is figured and carefully analysed) has argued that this figure

must have been first devised about the year 4,000, when the Sign of the Archer overlapped sufficiently to take the place of the Scorpion, as the autumn Sign. The date is probable on other grounds ; however, we must never forget that symbols may be chosen for more than one reason, and the more things they stood for the more mysterious and sacred they would be. The singular choice of an autumn Sign, instead of the favourite Bull of spring, to personify the Annual Sun, has to be accounted for, and so has the omission of the Horse, which it is fairly safe to pronounce the oldest part of the Sign of Sagittarius.

The likeness between Assur and Apollo as Archers, points to their common origin in the Aryan Sun-God, and this genealogy is confirmed in the case of Assur by his name, which is identified by Miss Plunket with the Persian *Ahura*, in Sanskrit, *Asura*,[1] and may be connected with the Scandinavian *Æsir* and the Etruscan *Æsar*, all these words meaning a God or the Gods. As in the case of the Latin *Deus*, our own *God*, and many others, the name of the class has become that of the supreme Deity.

I have already pointed to the north as the natural region for the progressive discovery of the sun ; and all historians are agreed that the religion of Zarathustra, which is the spiritual completion of the solar faith, arose in the country watered by the Oxus, or Amu Darya. In that part of the world therefore, and among the ancient Aryans, we are justified in looking for the source of the successive religious waves that rolled southward and westward carrying the Good Tidings of the sun. The historical triumphs of

[1] See Miss Plunket's work, p. 86 : "I would claim that the Assyrians borrowed not only this symbolism but even the very name of Assur from the Medes. For I look upon *Assur* as a 'loan-word' adopted from the Aryan *Asura*."

Cyrus and Cambyses, of Khengiz and Timur, were anticipated more than once in prehistoric times.[1] The Akkadians themselves have been conjectured to be a people from the north, and it is entirely probable that some later invasion should have planted the cult of the God Assur in the valley of the Tigris. The Semitic conquerors who afterwards burst out of the Arabian desert were a barbarous race who everywhere adopted the religion of the peoples they subdued.[2] Along the lower Euphrates they absorbed the astrological faiths of Akkad. On the Tigris they found Assur in possession, and he became the supreme God of the Ninevite empire.

The old ancestral cults were in their nature exclusive even where they were not exterminating. A scientific faith is in its nature inclusive, that is to say proselytising. It purports to be a complete system of truth, true alike in every age and for every people. Hence it is that the history of monotheism is the history of religious persecution, offensive on the part of monotheists and defensive on the part of those whom they attack, from the episode of the Aten worship in Egypt, fifteen centuries before Christ, to that of the Boxer Rising in China, nineteen centuries after him.

> The famous heresy of the Aten Disk, as it is called by Egyptologists, has been explained by some of them as the substitution of the worship of a material sun—the red-hot plate of Anaxagoras—for that of the solar Genius previously honoured by the Egyptians.

[1] Myres, *Dawn of History*. There is a general agreement among historians, ethnologists and philologists on this part of the subject. The astronomer, R. A. Proctor, in his *Great Pyramid*, argues that it was built by astrologers from a latitude north of Ararat.

[2] Ragozin's *Chaldæa* and *Assyria*, and the articles on Assyria and Babylon in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* may be consulted for the development in those regions. I deal with the story of Palestine in a succeeding chapter, x.

I shall deal with it presently[1] as a monotheist reformation. So far as I am aware the distinctions drawn in the present work between the worship of the sun as (1) Day Star, (2) Ruler of the Year, (3) Giver of Light, and (4) Master of Life on earth, have not been clearly grasped before ; a circumstance to which I draw attention as accounting for any divergences that may be apparent between this condensed statement and numerous existing theories which I refrain from discussing in detail. The best refutation of a false view is, as Emerson observes, to set out the facts in their right order, and I am trying in the spirit of Euclid to set out the leading facts in the history of religion in such a way that each will be seen as the necessary consequence of its predecessors.[2]

5. *The Saviour*

The last and greatest advance made in the science of the sun was the discovery that his heat was the cause of vegetable life. The name of the prehistoric Copernicus to whom we owe this, perhaps the most important step ever taken in pure science, has been confounded with that of Zarathustra, whose date as given by the old historians ranges from 6000 to 600 B.C. All we can safely say is that he most probably flourished in the same region of the Oxus, and that his discovery was a corollary, obvious enough to us, from those already outlined.

[1] In the following section.

[2] I have been greatly indebted in this chapter, and indeed throughout this work, to the profound and suggestive writings of Gerald Massey. Unfortunately his imagination sometimes outran his evidence, and was not always under the control of a sound judgment, so that his *Natural Genesis* and *Book of the Beginnings* are likely to mislead the reader not trained in anthropological science. On referring back to them, I have continually found that their chief value to myself has been in starting trains of thought, which have led me to conclusions not reached in the original. It is for these reasons that I am so seldom able to cite from the most inspired of all students of human origins ; one who, like Leverrier and Adams in astronomy, anticipated the results of observation.

The old magical reasoning that what goes before is the cause of what comes after was justified at last. The sun was the only true timekeeper of the seasons, he was the bringer of summer, and the bringer of the harvest, and both were his gifts to men.

In tropical climates the sun is the enemy of man. Even in that of the Mediterranean he is fierce and feared. In the *Iliad* Phœbus is introduced as the author of a pestilence. We must go farther north to find him first in the character of the friend and saviour of mankind.

> It is to this consideration that Thorpe attributes the fact that the sex of the sun is feminine in the old northern languages, and masculine in the south.

For this benign aspect of the solar God there was another reason. The discovery that the sun caused the seed to sprout and the earth to bring forth her fruits, proved the falsehood and folly of the old magical rites performed for such purposes. The rite to which our attention has been chiefly confined, that of agricultural homicide, received its death-blow. It was not the human saviour whose blood, watering the furrows, gave life to the seed. Life was given by the Saviour on high. It was not the substance, or in modern language, energy, of the slain Genius that men received in the wheaten cake, or in the sacred cup; it was the energy of the Genius in heaven. The cake no longer required to be kneaded with human flesh. It was made in the shape of the sun, and signed with his celestial cross. Solarism, like other religions, had to address mankind in words which they already understood. The sun was called the Saviour to signify that he did the work of the human saviour.

So great a revolution could not be carried out in

a day, nor in a century. It has not been carried out in every corner of the world to-day. But there is ample evidence that the missionaries of the new religion were philanthropists, and that they exerted themselves to put an end to the custom of human sacrifice. The same spirit is seen at work in widely separated countries and ages. The Hellenes, and afterwards the Romans, showed a horror, quite new in the history of the world, of the bloody holocausts of their Phœnician foes; and the similar rites of the Druids were put down by the Cæsars. Even the sacrifice of animals, at one time encouraged as a mild alternative, is denounced by the Hebrew prophets as soon as they feel the mild breath blowing from the north.[1] And the source of their inspiration is shown by their contemporaneous efforts to abolish the observance of new moons and sabbaths.[2] The old lunar festivals, rooted in the religion of the Jewish race, were an abhorrence to the solar God.

We have seen that the human saviour was still sacrificed among the Khonds of India in the nineteenth century. But this was only the case among certain tribes, who worshipped the Earth-Goddess Tari. Their neighbours, who worshipped the Light-God Boora, held human sacrifice in horror. And they preserved a tradition that Boora had sent an agent, "a minor god," to substitute a *bull* for the human victim. Another myth had it that he sent four divine agents—perhaps the four solar Seasons.[3] It is the same reformation that we associate with Hercules.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the

[1] Isaiah i. 11-14.

[2] "The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with." Isaiah i. 13.

[3] See *Pagan Christs*, by J. M. Robertson, p. 110. Of course Mr. Robertson is not responsible for the above interpretation of the evidence.

change is the contrast between the mythological figures of Apollo and of Herakles. Apollo is the God of Light, driving his bright chariot across the sky, darting his rays, and sometimes darting disease with them. Herakles is the Sun represented by a Divine Man toiling in the service of humanity. His life is passed on earth. He is a hero in the original sense of the word, suffering under the wrath of Hera, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The change is from the worship of the Day Star to the worship of the living and loving Son of God. It is almost the change from Paganism to Christianity; the Labours of Herakles may be read as the Gospel of the Sun.

The prophets of the new faith took up the ancient folk-tales into their Gospel, and the old story of the Zodiac was told anew. It does not follow that there was no real Herakles, no apostle who carried the Good Tidings round the Mediterranean shores. In at least four places, in Greece, in Asia and in Egypt, each of them by the sea, the classical writers have recorded that the custom of human sacrifice was put an end to by the arrival of Herakles, though the incidents are differently related. It is exactly what monotheism has done in Africa within this generation.

> During a tour of my Nigerian province I came to town after town where I was informed that the people had sacrificed a man at Easter, till a few years before. The Muslim invaders had forbidden them to slay a human victim, and they had substituted a goat.
>
> Either the same discovery was made with the same result in the other hemisphere, or solar missionaries crossed the Pacific, and evangelised Peru. The Incas, styled Children of the Sun, taught its exclusive worship, and put down human sacrifice.[1]

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, B. II., c. 10.

We are now in a position to understand the heresy of the Aten Disk—a symbol perhaps copied from the Ring of Assur. The religion thus named was brought into Egypt by a northern princess married to one of the Pharaohs, and forced upon the nation by her son.[1] As the Day Star, the sun of course had been worshipped by the Egyptians from time immemorial, and we are told that they had three distinct names for him as the Genius of morning, noon, and evening.[2] The priesthood may have advanced as far as to discover, or recognise the truth of the discovery, that he was all that the new faith proclaimed him. But to preach him publicly as the Giver of the Harvest, the Saviour, and the one true God, meant uprooting the whole national religion. And that is what the heretical Pharaoh did. A monument that has been widely reproduced shows the solar disk sending down rays that terminate in hands, the symbols of help and friendship and protection.

The great Theban sacerdotal order took the alarm, and the heretical dynasty was overthrown in the next generation. But though the heretical monuments were obliterated, the heresy made its way under other names. The spirit of Osiris was considered as inhabiting the solar orb. In course of time the Osirian Mystery was explained as a solar allegory; and the Sun-God Amen-Ra was worshipped as the supreme, though not of course the sole, God of the last dynasties. The name *Amen*, added to the older Ra, signifies the recognition of the sun as Divine Lord and Saviour; to pro-

[1] *History of Egypt*, by Flinders Petrie, vol. ii. p. 211-218. The speech of her native country, Mitanni on the upper Euphrates, and the name of its king, Tushratta, are regarded as Aryan by some scholars. See Myres, *Dawn of History*, p. 197.

[2] Compare Mungo Park's statement as to the Negro divisions of the Day, above p. 121.

nounce it was an act of mysterious religious efficacy, like the Buddhist pronunciation of *Om mana*, and to this day it would be felt irreverent by the ordinary Christian to omit it from his prayers.

It is easier to change theology than ritual, and the abolition of human sacrifice was a very gradual process. In the meanwhile the new religion made its way as a reformation of the theory. Sacrifice, whether human or animal, became less magical and more religious. The victim was less and less thought of as himself the Genius ; he was the ransom offered to the offended Genius in heaven. The original significance of these rites was so entirely lost sight of in the reformed religions of the Mediterranean that its recovery by anthropological students has come as a surprise to modern Christendom. The impression produced by the Hebrew and the classical literature has always been that sacrifice was simply an offering made to appease the God for the misdeeds of his worshipper, or to procure some boon. " Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," writes Paul, like one stating a familiar truth too obvious for argument. This advance, for it is a real advance in morality, though it may be a relapse in logic, was due to the astrologers. It was they who taught mankind to raise their eyes from earth to heaven, to exchange gods of clay for Gods of Light, to feel afar off the presence of a Power in nature infinitely greater and wiser and better than themselves, and to grope however blindly towards it.

The influence of the new faith is most conspicuous in literature. God was removed to a greater distance, and his character was elevated with the moral improvement in his worshippers. The Greeks reformed their tragedies, and the

Homeric poems were censured for their descriptions of life on Olympus. The Hebrews rewrote their chronicles and softened or omitted some of the coarser traits in the portraits of Yahweh. The ark was emptied of its magical contents, the rod that budded and the sacred stone. The process had begun before the Captivity, but yet there is a very marked progress in reverence from Amos to Ezekiel.

"Behold Yahweh stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand," writes the contemporary of King Uzziah, as though he were writing of a man (*Amos* vii. 7). The prophet beside the river Chebar strains the art of speech to put distance between himself and the Almighty. "Upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. . . . This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." (*Ezekiel* i. 26, 28.)

Elsewhere the spread of the monotheistic creed may be traced underground, burrowing its way like a mole among the half-forgotten Mysteries. It has often been maintained that the Unity of God was the grand secret communicated to the adept in the final stage of all the ancient Mysteries.[1] Such a view may well be right as regards the historical age. The perils that await the teacher of new truths to the vulgar are not a discovery of modern nor of apostolic times. The martyrdoms that have converted the religion of Europe to monotheism include those of Pythagoras and Socrates. There is no breach of continuity, no sudden gap, between the Gnostics of Crotona and the Gnostics of Antioch and Alexandria.

[1] "*L' Unité de Dieu etait le grand dogma de tous les Mystéres*" is the motto of a curious work on the Freemasons, founded on Dupuis' *Origine de tous les Cultes.*

It is in keeping with the entire evolution that we should find the new faith most actively at work in transforming the agricultural Mysteries. The celebrated rites of Eleusis preserved some features of the Pelasgian Shrovetide, and their extreme antiquity may be inferred from the fact that the Corn Spirit was represented by a maiden, instead of a male Genius. In what may be called the Maternal age, when the Virgin was the most obvious symbol of fruitfulness, her flesh may well have been esteemed the most efficacious charm. We need not enter here into the history of Demeter and Persephone, or Koré ; it is enough for the present purpose that the antique ritual was intended to secure the resurrection of the buried seed in the glory of the harvest. In classical times the Eleusinian initiation was believed to secure the immortality of the soul, by purifying the initiated from his sins. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead represents a slightly cruder stage in the same development. Paul adapted the ancient language to the modern faith, and the dead incantation of the Bronze Age lives again in the glorious eloquence of the Burial Service.

"That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. So also is the resurrection of the dead ; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

So is the new religion the spiritual body of the old.

CHAPTER VII

THE END OF THE WORLD

1. The Historical Era. 2. The Eurasian Revolution: (1) Fall of the Kings; (2) Fall of the Gods.

1. *The Historical Era*

In approaching the era of historical memory I am more than ever bound to remind the reader that the order adopted in this work is rather logical than chronological. The breadth of statement to which I am driven by the vastness of the subject can only be justified as the mapmaker is justified in representing his rivers and mountains by a few black lines that indicate the general trend of the landscape, without pretending to reproduce the turnings and windings, the peaks and valleys, that actually diversify it.

I am endeavouring to give what seems to me to have been the true historical sequence of the religious evolution, but what is gained in clearness by this method must of course be lost in completeness. I have to ask the reader to keep in mind that the earlier and later cults and beliefs that we have been considering flourished—as they still flourish—side by side, in the same geographical area, in the same city, and often in the same mind. The anatomist may dissect the muscular and nervous systems, and separate the veins from the arteries, but they are all intertwined in the body of the subject.

Thus while the civilised Egyptians were reckoning time by the sun, the desert tribes on either side

of them still reckoned by the moon and stars. The Israelites continued to sacrifice their children[1] after the Hellenes had learned to regard such rites with horror. The Italian rustic went on resorting to the village rain-maker, when the citizens of Rome put up their public prayers to the Capitoline Jove. And the pontiffs who used the popular faith as a political lever, and edited the calendar to suit their private purposes, nevertheless continued to set cakes before the spirits of their forefathers.

We may say, speaking generally, that the tendency of religious evolution had been to raise men's eyes from the earth-born to the celestial Gods, from the incarnate and visible Genius below to the invisible King of Heaven. But it is doubtful how far the change had penetrated below the educated class. We must beware of mistaking literary and scientific religions for the popular faith. The progress of learned discovery is apt to outrun the comprehension of the vulgar, and sometimes the digestive powers of the wise; the heart learns more slowly than the brain, and emotion exercises a silent veto against reason.

The era of historical memory is not the same for all mankind and all parts of the world. For the races which we call savage it has not arrived yet. The fabulous age of the Jews was contemporaneous with the historical age of the Egyptians. The same generation which gave birth to the Annals of Tacitus gave birth to the Acts of the Apostles. And in the nineteenth century the critical historian[2] who refuted the fables of Livy respected the fables of Luke.

[1] To Yahweh, in the opinion of some modern scholars. See *Encyclopædia Biblica* under Moloch.

[2] Niebuhr.

Yet there is an epoch which deserves to be marked in the chronicles of our planet as the substantial point of departure for the story of modern civilisation; and there is a real difference between the sources of our information before and afterwards. The history of the elder past has to be pieced together from scattered tablets and broken shards dug up out of the ashes of a ruined world. From the sixth century before Christ onwards we possess something like a complete file of the journals in the East and West. Almost in the same generation K'ung the Master[1] wrote the first book of the Chinese annals, and Herodotus began the story of Europe, with the great raid of the Fire-worshippers into Hellas.

Astrologers have fixed the New Era two or three centuries later, with reference to the arbitrary point in the heavens at which the celestial Ram is succeeded by the Fish. The Muslims with more propriety reckon their years from the revelation which, for Arabia at all events, closed the "times of ignorance." And the Christians have gradually introduced the date of Jesus the Nazarene as the measuring point of European chronology. But a wider and more rational survey will render it clear that the epoch which witnessed the simultaneous appearance on the stage of the world of K'ung and Lao in China, of Buddha in India, of the Persians in Western Asia and the Philosophers in Europe, is the true beginning of the modern world. And this epoch closely corresponds with that actually assigned by astronomers as the date of the great scientific reformation of the Zodiac, when the variable star-groups were replaced by twelve geometrical divisions of the ecliptic, 700 B.C.

[1] The form Confucius, like Charlemagne, is composed of the name and the honorific addition.

That it is also the beginning of the historical record is, of course, no mere coincidence. The rise of history was once attributed to the invention of writing. We have now learnt that the art of writing had flourished for many thousands of years before. What transformed historical literature was the invention of prose. The magical lay was succeeded by the saga, and facts were distinguished from fables. That is the difference between Homer and Herodotus, between the history of Troy and the history of Salamis, between the annals of the Roman kings and the annals of the consuls, and with fair allowance for the backwardness of the Folk, between the lives of Hercules and the lives of Christ.

The writing of history was rendered possible by the revolution of which we have already caught a glimpse, as it were, in the background of the unrecorded past. In superseding the old Vegetation cults the Solar cult gradually disestablished the religion of King-worship. Jack-in-the-Green and John Barleycorn became comic heroes instead of tragic ones, and the coronation of the Queen of the May sank from a magical rite to a child's game. If the political king continued to rule his people he ceased to rule the seasons; if he was still worshipped, he was no longer worshipped as the supreme God. Right across the world his divine right received a mortal shock from which it has never recovered since. The Roman emperor might have temples built and incense burnt to him, but in his most vainglorious moments he could not pretend to the magical power of the Pacific chief who is able to slay his subject by a muttered curse.[1]

Up to this time no truthful history had been

[1] Vespasian was induced to perform a miracle in Alexandria in order to impress the populace, but not to believe in it.

written, because the truth about either a living or a dead king was blasphemy. Even in our own day it would be extremely dangerous for an English writer to tell the truth about Queen Victoria; and a generation, perhaps two generations, must elapse before any historian ventures to publish the name by which the last king of England was known to his intimate associates. Thus it is that the posthumous historian is still constantly obliged to choose between traditional gossip and official documents, equally unworthy of belief. In the prehistoric age this tapu was prolonged and strengthened by the whole force of the religious sentiment. To criticise Pharaoh was as dreadful as to criticise the Trinity. In the old Chinese etiquette the very name of a deceased emperor is tapu, and the signs by which it is written drop out of use in the literature of the next age.[1]

Such was the superstition that K'ung braved and broke down by his celebrated Annals—*Spring and Fall*—the work of which he declared that by it he should be known, and by it he should be judged. European scholars have allowed themselves to be puzzled by this saying, concerning what appears to them a dry and meagre chronicle. But its importance was appreciated by Mang,[2] who pronounced it an achievement as great as the draining of the empire. "K'ung the Master completed the *Spring and Fall*, and rebellious ministers and bad sons were struck with terror."[3]

[1] In China the Emperor had three names—Throne name, Calendar name, and Dynasty name. The Calendar name was never pronounced and therefore *tapu* after his death. The name was never used in the royal lists and the characters in which it was written never used in official documents. A similar custom exists in Japan.—Williams' *Chinese*, p. 200 *et seq.*

[2] *Mencius* for Europeans.

[3] I am indebted for this quotation to the *History of Chinese Literature*, by Professor H. A. Giles, p. 26.

Note.

The reformation of the Zodiac, and the difference between the old reckoning by actual constellations and the new one by geometrical compartments, named after Signs that have since shifted their places in the sky, has been the cause of so much confusion, especially in the minds of our modern Gnostics, that the reader may be glad to see the very lucid explanation, which I owe to the great courtesy of the Astronomer Royal.

Royal Observatory, Greenwich,
London, S.E.,
December 4th, 1912.

Dear Sir,—The only information that we have as to the way in which the ancient astronomers defined the borders of the constellations is derived from the catalogue of Claudius Ptolemy, *circ.* A.D. 130. This, no doubt, represents with fair correctness the arrangement of the constellations as recognised by Hipparchus in his catalogue now lost, of date *circ.* 129 B.C., and his catalogue again will have corresponded in this respect to the observations of Timocharis and Aristyllus made at Alexandria 150 years earlier, for it was from the comparison between his longitudes of the stars and those of his predecessors that Hipparchus discovered the fact and determined the amount of the precessional movement. We have no other means of ascertaining the original boundaries of the constellations.

Adopting the catalogue of Ptolemy, then, it is clear that the original constellations of the Zodiac were of very unequal length; Virgo extended along the ecliptic for about 45°, Cancer for about 20°, Pisces for about 42°, the mean length of a constellation being of course 30°.

About 700 B.C. or a little later, this unequal division of the zodiac was found inconvenient and the ecliptic was divided into twelve equal and symmetrical divisions, each being called after the zodiacal constellation to which it corresponded most nearly. These are now usually called for distinction the Twelve *Signs* of the Zodiac, and they have no connection with any stars at all; they are reckoned from the point of the heavens occupied by the Sun at the Spring equinox.

As the constellation Pisces is about 42° in length, the vernal equinox will take more than 3,000 years to pass through it.

Hipparchus assumed that it was exactly on the borders of Aries and Pisces at the date of his catalogue—viz., 129 B.C. The star γ Arietis is some 4° to the east of the First Point of Aries as Hipparchus fixed it.

A paper on this subject was communicated to the Royal Astronomical Society by Mr. Walter Maunder in 1904, *Monthly Notices*, vol. lxiv, p. 488, who also has an article on "Astral Mythology" in the London *Quarterly Review* for October of the current year.—Yours faithfully,

F. W. Dyson,
Astronomer Royal.

Allen Upward, Esq.

2. *The Eurasian Revolution*: (1) *Fall of the Kings*

Thus the great movement of the human mind which reached its natural end in the French Revolution was from the first a revolt against the superstition of heredity, whether taking the form of ancestor-worship or child-worship, royalty or caste. And before quitting the topic of chronology it is worth while to remark how the reckoning of time itself has changed in accordance with the spirit of the Historical Age. The ancient reckoning was by the reigns of kings, for which the Romans substituted the practice of naming the years after their annually elected rulers, the consuls. The Greeks not long before had devised the plan of counting by the quadrennial celebrations of the Olympic Games. A more general method of reckoning from the foundation of the city of Rome came into use over the whole Roman empire, and was only abandoned by degrees in favour of the supposed date of the birth of Jesus, as the era of Christendom. Yet this Christian reckoning has not yet entirely replaced the older royal one. In medieval deeds and public documents the year of the king's reign is inserted alongside with the year of grace,[1] and the most important transactions of the British empire, the Acts of Parliament, continue to this day to be dated by the year of the reigning king of England instead of by that of the King of Christendom.

In the light of these facts we are prepared to see an underlying connection and a common spirit

[1] Both dates are used in parish registers of the sixteenth century, *e.g.*, Gretton, Northamptonshire (1599). Compare the elaborate chronology of Luke iii. 1, 2, in which emperor, governor, tetrarchs and high priests are all inserted. The Jewish chroniclers date each king's accession by the year of his neighbour's reign.

in that mighty wave of enlightenment which, almost in a single century, rolled across the Eurasian continent from the Pacific to the Tyrrhene Sea, everywhere replacing the superstition of hereditary genius by reverence for true genius, as revealed in the Chinese Masters, in the Hindu Buddha, in the Aryan Zarathustra, and in the whole galaxy of Greek sages headed by the names of Thales and Pythagoras.

The centre of the spiritual conflagration which burnt up the ancient world was that region to which our attention has been drawn above as the probable birthplace of the Solar cult—of which the worship of Fire will presently appear as the complete and final development. The history of the Catholic or Universal Faith begins with Zarathustra. Before entering on it, however, we may make in advance a useful comparison with the parallel movements in the East.

In China the progress of astrological discovery either did not reach, or did not stop at, the full height of the Solar Faith. In the Chinese philosophy the sun never seems to have acquired a monopoly of the reverence due to the celestial Gods; and accordingly the Chinese have not experienced either the blessing or the curse of monotheism. The inspiring impulse of religious zeal has been wanting in their history, and they have been equally free from its devastating effects. For this reason the breach between the historic and the prehistoric ages of the Celestial empire has been comparatively slight, and the educated class has been allowed to develop its own intelligence without having to resist or yield to the superstition of the vulgar. The great mass of the people has been contented with the rival cults of Taoism and Buddhism. The pious learned have accepted the word Heaven (*Tien*) as a satisfactory name

for that Providence which shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will. They know no personal God. Theirs is the reverence which declines to scrutinise and delineate in arrogant dogmas the nature of the Power "in which we live and move and have our being."[1] Their faith is the tender trust of a child in his father, and not the obstinate confidence of the fanatic in a God as violent as himself. And to this delicate apprehension of the unseen the noblest minds had attained before the Confucian era, if we may judge from the ancient Prayer of the Emperor Ching, as it is written in the *Book of the Odes* :—

"Let me be reverent, be reverent,
Even as the way of Heaven is evident,
And its appointment easy is to mar.

Let me not say,—'It is too high above,'
Above us and below us doth It move,
And daily watches wheresoe'er we are.

It is but as a little child I ask,
Without intelligence to do my task;
Yet learning month by month and day by day

I will hold fast some gleams of knowledge bright.
Help me to bear my heavy burden right,
And show me how to walk in wisdom's way."[2]

The rare references to religion by K'ung breathe the same spirit of aloofness from theology. One of the subjects he refrained from discussing with his disciples was spirits; another was "the appointments of Heaven," an expression probably meaning astrological predictions. To one who asked him about serving the spirits he retorted—"While you are not able to serve men how can you

[1] This pantheist sentiment is quoted by Paul from Aratus, the astronomer-poet of Greece.

[2] This rendering has appeared in the *Odes of Confucius*, Wisdom of the East Series.

serve spirits ? "—and again—" While you do not know life how can you know about death ? "[1] Equally negative of theistic cults of all kinds was the teaching of the great mystic, Lao, in whose doctrine of the all-pervading Tao we may discern a certain likeness to the Universal Soul of the Western Gnostics—at all events an impression of the same catholic or universal philosophy. The doctrine of the Buddha was not less atheistic in the Christian sense of that word. If the spirits do not stand altogether outside his system they appear to enter it merely as higher or lower forms, gods or demons, in the endless series through which the soul transmigrates. This is very much like the indifference of K'ung the Master. The parallel is completed by the Buddhist revolt against the Brahman caste.

Although the Brahmans had already parted with most of their political power to the rajahs, or military chiefs, they were the legitimate representatives of the sacred kingship. The Brahman was, and is, something more than a priest. He is the Divine Man—in learned theory an incarnation of the Supreme Being ; in the eyes of the vulgar a walking and talking god.

> The nature of the tapu appears in a letter addressed by a village pawnbroker to one of his neighbours in 1892 : " You respect me as a Brahman, therefore by this letter I tell you that I shall be very pleased if, immediately on eceipt of this letter, you come and see me without delay. *If I am pleased it will be good for your household.*" (*Trial of Shama Charan Pal.*)

Siddharta[2] does not seem to have attacked this superstition directly, but he cut away a main

[1] These quotations from the Analects are given in my contribution to the above series, *Sayings of Confucius*, now out of print.

[2] From the many names of the Buddha I select the one he is said to have borne first, as a secular prince.

prop of the Brahman authority by depriving the caste of their monopoly of salvation. If himself one of the rajah class by birth, he had a right to approach this as a personal question. He preached the Good Tidings of salvation free to all, and pronounced the true Brahman to be the man who had attained to enlightenment and the extinction of desire.

> Not the altar makes the Brahman, nor the raiment's priestly art,
> But the sacred fire of knowledge, burning brightly in the heart.
> Him I call indeed a Brahman, when he longs and wants no more ;
> Wandering here, but not abiding, every earthly wish is o'er. (*Dhamapada*, ch. xxvi.)

So runs the glorious hymn which closes the most perfect of the Buddhist scriptures. The gospel proved to be too high for humanity at large. It is the grand mistake of genius to give others credit for its own lofty qualities. It is true that every man has the right to work out his own salvation. It is not true that every man has the power. Most men and women feel that they need a saviour in one above them, better than themselves. The Buddha had no sooner closed his eyes than his relics were eagerly parted among his disciples. Beyond the Himalayas a fourth of mankind worship as their Saviour him who preached the doctrine of every man his own saviour ; and in the land where Siddharta trod the followers of another Saviour have come upon Neolithic clansmen sacrificing a Brahman boy, and watering their furrows with his blood.[1]

Passing over the Iranian area for a moment, we find precisely the same changes, religious and

[1] See above, chap. v., p. 102.

political, taking place among the Aryans settled in the Mediterranean basin. The philosophical systems that broke like glittering bubbles one after the other from the seething curiosity of Hellas were all alike in their indifference or hostility to most of the existing Gods. Materialists like Epicurus dismissed them with Confucian politeness to some flowery realm of their own; idealists like Plato sought to concentrate their powers and attributes in one Divine Being hardly less remote from the common life of men on earth.

In Greece most of the sacred kings had disappeared, or sunk to the condition of obscure priests, at the beginning of the historical era. We cannot trace their fall directly to the rise of the philosophers, but we can see in both changes the results of a common cause. Of the once famous Seven Wise Men whose names stand at the head of the history of Greek philosophy, several are invested with the distinct character of political reformers and legislators; and one of them is expressly said to have curtailed the authority of the hereditary priest-kings of Sparta.[1] The fall of the Roman kings followed fifty years after the landing of Pythagoras in Italy.[2]

> The Seven Wise Men offer a good example of the influence of myth in biography. It will hardly be pretended that Solon and Thales are allegorical characters, embodiments of the seven planets or seven days of the week or seven stars of the Plough. Yet there are seven Rishis or Buddhas to be met with in contemporary Hindu mythology, and an ancient

[1] *Diogenes Laertius, Life of Chilo.* Sir Gilbert Murray assigns the reformation of the Olympian religion to the sixth century. *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 60.

[2] Dr. Warde Fowler, in the *Religious Experience of the Roman People*, has ventured farther than I do in connecting these developments in Italy.

hymn to Agni contains the words,—" Seven are thy holy sages." It is a weak mind that is dazzled by these astronomical conjunctions. In the same way a number of wise saws are attributed to the Seven, some of which they probably coined, some they merely quoted, and others they never uttered at all.

The only important Greek state in which the sacred kings survived, though with restricted powers, was Sparta; and Herodotos remarks that in that state other callings were hereditary, including that of musician. We can see that the principle of caste was bound up with religious royalty, and that in delivering mankind from the hereditary Genius, the New Faith delivered them at the same time from the superstition of the heredity of genius. Such an emancipation goes some way to account for that extraordinary outburst of genius in all the arts at once, that transformed Hellas in a few generations from the ignorant pupil of Asia into the teacher of Europe for the next two thousand years. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are rescued from the custody of the Homeric guild of rhapsodists by Peisistratos; Aeschylos converts the archaic *Goat Song of the Beer*[1] into the historic tragedy; and in architecture, sculpture, oratory and history the human spirit gains almost at a bound what was to prove its high-water mark till the Renaissance.

The argument must not be pressed too far. The conditions required for high artistic achievement are difficult to ascertain; the freedom of Switzerland has proved nearly barren of genius, and the literature and art of America are not yet equal to the greatness of her people. Yet there

[1] I need not discuss Miss Harrison's new etymology (*Prolegomena to the Study of the Greek Religion*, p. 413 *et seq.*) of tragedy from *trâgos* (spelt) instead of *trágos* (goat), inasmuch as the two cults naturally combined, as in the case of the Bald-faced Stag. See below, p. 195.

can be no difficulty in deciding that, whatever conditions may be favourable to genius, caste is utterly fatal to it. So much seems to be at length established in the opinion of mankind. From heredity in every other walk of life humanity suffers still, and seems to suffer gladly, but it suffers no longer under the hereditary novelist or painter or composer. In theory the slopes of Parnassus are unfenced.

I have not touched on the objection that the purity of caste cannot be positively secured. That is, perhaps, an alleviation. William the Conqueror is not likely to have been the only low-born king of England.

2. *Fall of the Gods*

Under the influence of political as well as scientific motives the priesthoods of the Egyptian and Babylonian capitals made some attempts to amalgamate various local cults in a national scheme. With the same design, the poets and almanac-makers of Greece busied themselves with divine genealogies and the scandals of Olympus. It was not difficult to see the likeness between the thunder-god of one mountain and his neighbour on another; nor to recognise that the same moon shone into the temples of Artemis at Ephesus and Diana at Rome. However, none of these efforts can be looked on as much more than the philosophical speculation of the learned class.

The same criticism applies more strongly to the benevolent attempts of modern scholars to provide the Egyptian and Babylonian worshipper with a more definite theology than his own priests succeeded in giving him.

On the whole, no doubt, there was a trend towards monotheism in theory. The various gods were considered as aspects of one God, or shall we say, as the Persons of, not a Trinity, but a Plura-

lity. The heathen idol, like the Catholic image, was worshipped as a fetish by the ignorant, but treated by the more enlightened as a telephone communicating with Heaven.

Underlying the practice of idolatry there is a psychological law at work. The idol enables the believer to concentrate his mind and energise his will. Just as the signing of a pledge strengthens the resolution of the repentant drunkard, so does the idolater's vow strengthen his. It may even be suggested that a telepathic force comes into play, and that an earnest prayer sends forth a kind of Hertzian wave which influences distant minds.

> It is well known that an eminent philanthropist of the nineteenth century (Muller, of Bristol) maintained a large orphanage without ever asking for money except in prayer.

At all events there can be no question that the followers of every faith have always believed that prayer was frequently effectual. And whether true or false there is nothing insane in such a belief as long as the prayers are addressed to anthropomorphic gods of capricious natures and limited powers. The curse of monotheism is its relentless logic which teaches that it is as reasonable and hopeful to pray for the removal of a mountain or the stoppage of the sun and moon, as for relief from nervous pains.

> It should be as easy for the Virgin of Lourdes to replace an amputated leg as to reinvigorate a paralysed one. The former miracle would convert half of Europe and America to the Roman Church; and having regard to the biology of the lobster it could hardly be pronounced "supernatural." Yet I doubt if the most devout Catholic would consider it worth while to make the journey to Lourdes in search of such a cure. The same criticism applies to the Eddy cult.

The progress of the New Faith in the Mediterranean itself has the appearance of telepathic power working on a large scale. The name which it took was *Philosophy*, and the speculations of the philosophers had no more interest for the masses than had the systems of the priestly theologians. Generally speaking the philosophers were unpopular. The life of Anaxagoras was threatened. Socrates was put to death. Plato regarded himself as a type of the righteous man suffering persecution. Aristotle was obliged to flee from Athens. Yet from their combined activities a scepticism seemed to radiate, and the official religions everywhere drooped as though the Zarathustrian fire had scorched them from afar off. The oracles fell silent because men had ceased to consult them. It was not the preaching of the Christians that overthrew the Olympian religion. On the contrary it was the decay of that religion which caused men everywhere to turn with hope to the Good News that spread round the Mediterranean; and the preaching of the Christians, so far from weakening the Pagan cults generally, at first seemed to revive them.

> "It is beyond doubt that the temples, which have been almost deserted, are beginning again to be thronged with worshippers, that the sacred rites which have for a long time been allowed to lapse are now being renewed, and that the food for the sacrificial victims is once more finding a sale, whereas up to recently a buyer was hardly to be found." So writes Pliny in his famous report to the Emperor Trajan on the Christians of Bithynia, in the second century. (*Letters*, Book x., 98.)

The distinction between book religion and folk religion, theology and faith, comes out very

clearly in the age that saw the beginnings of Christianity. As the bright Gods of the Homeric pantheon paled and faded out of the reverence of their worshippers, the old subterranean cults woke into renewed life, and put forth fresh buds. In the end the faith of Jupiter and Apollo was left to the poets, while the Divine Mother regained her old prestige, and the Divine Goat lived on to terrify the imagination of the Middle Ages. Something similar took place in the Baltic zone as soon as the Christian missionaries found their way thither. The whole religion of the Druids, the elaborate mythology of the Eddas, in short, every distinctive Aryan belief, faded fast out of the memory of mankind, while the elves and bogeys, the Puck and Luck, of an older time and more savage race, continued to haunt their native realms till the Reformation.

Similar results are seen flowing from a similar cause to-day. As the Nicene Creed visibly withers before the blast of science, immemorial superstitions insensibly revive. The capital of the British empire is become the happy hunting-ground of witches, and magical amulets are seen in every shop window. The priests of the established Church have drawn out the dusty vestments of a bygone age, to compel that reverence which their doctrines no longer command. The Church of Rome has had to yield to the impulse of her subjects to replace the worship of the Divine Son by the still older worship of the Divine Mother; and at this moment sacramental cakes, stamped with the image of Mary, are being eaten in some parts of her territory, as a popular substitute for the official Mass.

A Polish friend has informed me that these Mary Cakes, as he called them, are credited with the same

anthropophagous efficacy as the consecrated host. I do not understand that the Church has yet taken this cult under its official patronage, but it is a natural accompaniment to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which was itself a concession to the same popular sentiment. (In Bavaria, I am informed, similar tablets are sold in sheets like postage stamps.)[1]

In the old Mediterranean world there was another cause apparent for the superior vitality of the folk religions, and their ultimate adoption in modified forms by the Catholic Church. The bright denizens of Olympus were the Gods of the White Man, brought with them from their northern homes by the conquering Greeks and Latins in a prehistoric age. Their cult was that of a foreign aristocracy, and it must be considered doubtful whether it had ever taken hold of that submerged population of slaves and helots of which we hear so little from the historians. Such a religion was really doomed from the first. The climate of the Mediterranean fought the battle of Christianity in advance. As the northerners became southerners they fell under the sway of the southern Gods, and changed their religion as they changed their skin. The old Syrian commander was not altogether superstitious when he attributed the victory of the Israelites to their God being a God of the hills, and decided to engage them on the plain.[2] In the same way the Hausas long believed that the magic of the English was only powerful on the river Niger, and would desert them if they advanced inland. It did so desert them in many a Continental war. There are more Gods in heaven and earth than we have yet dreamt of; perhaps a future historian

[1] A British Minister for War recently interrupted himself in a speech in the House of Commons, to touch wood.

[2] 1 Kings xx. 23.

may pronounce that the mosquito was the real Pope of Rome, before whose curse the German kaisers fell.

In Europe, as in India, in politics as in religion, the Solar Faith came too soon, and spent itself almost in vain. Science outran faith; the philosophers lost touch with humanity. The folk were not ready to part with their living or their dead idols. A senate stood for power not grounded in either superstition or affection, and there began an age of civil wars only ended by the restoration of monarchy. In the meanwhile religion suffered a mysterious sickness. Everywhere men were left desolate without the presence of the Divine Man; searching earth for a King and heaven for a God.

We must now return to that region, midway between India and Europe, which stands out in history as the world Sinai, where the One True God revealed himself in a fiery shape to his prophet Zarathustra, and whence the lava stream of Puritanism spread slowly over the Western lands.

In the meanwhile, lest the interpretation should be lost sight of in the history, we may view the stratification for a moment, as it were, in a vertical section, for all these stages of emotion and belief are present at the same time in the collective and individual conscience of mankind.

We have found in the story of magic the revelation of the Divine Man on earth, and in the story of religion the revelation of the Divine Man in Heaven. In the story of science we shall find the revelation of the Divine Spirit, freed from the human shape; so that the three Persons of the Christian Trinity seem to represent this cumulative revelation. Again, we have found the first

of these revelations ending in polytheism, and the second in monotheism, and we shall find the third ending in pantheism. But in each case the march of knowledge among the highest minds of the race outstripped the progress of the vulgar; so that the Catholic theology represents on the whole the monotheist stage, with a greater tincture of polytheism than of pantheism.

A third way of putting it is that the Infinite Life was revealed by magic under the shape of terrestrial gods, and by religion under that of Celestial Gods; while science reveals it as a Universal Spirit present on earth as it is in heaven. The Latin dogma of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son as well as from the Father may thus be justified as a true historical myth.

A more remarkable coincidence between symbol and substance, myth and history, is to follow. For we are about to see the Universal Spirit revealed to his prophet Zoroaster in the very shape in which he descended on the Day of Pentecost; and to mark the almost literal fulfilment of the words—"He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire."

CHAPTER VIII

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE

1. The Holy Spirit. 2. The Heat Wave. 3. The White Prophet. 4. The Devil.

1. *The Holy Spirit*

In tracing the rise of monotheism I have given the place of honour to the Solar Cult, because I am writing the history of science, and this was the most scientific line of progress. But the same tendency made itself manifest in other cults and under other symbols. Whether in a spirit of flattery or science, every ancient worshipper, whether of Zeus or Yahveh, Cybele or Isis, showed a disposition to acclaim his own deity as supreme, if not sole; just as the modern anthropologist shows a disposition to treat the particular belief or cult that most interests him as the mainspring of religious evolution.

Thus it would be quite possible to trace monotheism back to the primitive totemism. A union of clans necessitated the subordination of the clan totem gods to a tribal or national one; the conquest of other nations elevated the god of the conquerors in their own eyes, and in those of the conquered; and the god of a great empire like Assyria had some claims to the title of God of all the earth. It is equally possible to begin with the ancestral spirit of the clan, conceived of as the mother or father of its kings, and follow it through a similar course of promotion.

Again, we ought not to overlook the influence

on man's imagination of the great spectacle of the annual birth and death of vegetation, although it is dangerous to allot to mere fancy too great a part in the history of religion. The vital problem of the food supply was what really gave importance to the Vegetation cults, which we see in their rude beginning as " food-making " ceremonies among the Australian tribes. We have seen how closely the agricultural ritual was bound up with magic and polytheism all over the world, and how its more savage features lost their *raison d'être* through the discovery of the sun. There is evidence of an intermediate stage, especially in the countries bordering the eastern Mediterranean, of some importance in the history of Christianity, inasmuch as it prepared men's minds for the great generalisation of Zarathustra. The historical cults of Cybele and Attis, of Ishtar and Tammuz, and similar ones in this neighbourhood, are intelligible on the theory that the death and re-birth of all deciduous vegetation followed, or symbolised, or was symbolised by, the fortunes of an invisible Divine pair; these great spirits of Nature being impersonated by human actors or effigies in the annual rites. In the mythology of these cults the teeming Earth is figured as the great Virgin Mother, and the Vegetation Spirit as her son or husband. Such conceptions were calculated to broaden the theological horizon, and they may be thought a strictly logical and necessary consequence of the growth of civilisation. Once gathered in great cities like Babylon and Tyre, men could not keep up the old field magic in its simplicity; the citizens could only assist the farmers by symbolic rites; and the cult which had regard to the harvests of a whole kingdom already wore the aspect of a cult of Nature.

I cannot take leave of the great anthropologist to whom we owe so much light on this branch of the subject without a final word of acknowledgment. I have now endeavoured to do justice to Dr. Frazer's theory, as I have done throughout to his evidence, and I can only regret that the latter does not seem to me to justify the wide scope given by him to the former, and that he so seldom seems to me to trace things to their source. I must content myself, however, with illustrating the difference between our readings of the same facts by a single example. One well-known incident in the Osirian myth is the rending of the body of Osiris, and the scattering of the pieces in different parts of the earth.[1] That is quite possibly an historical incident, as Dr. Frazer recognises. In any case it is an extremely faithful copy of the ceremonies common to the savages of the Old and New Worlds, described above[2]; and I can only read it as a relic of similar practices in ancient Egypt. Dr. Frazer sees in it "a mythical way of expressing either the sowing or the winnowing of the grain."[3] If the play of poetical fancy, trying to interpret savagery to a civilised conscience, is thus to be accepted as aboriginal theology, the *Golden Bough* itself has been written in vain.

It is extremely difficult to draw the line between the Vegetation Cult and the two which touch it on either side, those of the Sun and of Generation.

The worship of the Generative Function has lain for two thousand years under the especial ban of the Christian Church, and any free discussion of it is still prohibited in England by popular sentiment and by an Act of Parliament. The origin and meaning of this remarkable tapu will be considered presently in connection with the Puritan

[1] Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris.*

[2] In ch. v. pp. 101-102.

[3] *Adonis, Attis and Osiris*, p. 331.

Faith; here it is enough to name the Generation Cult among the world cults that have contributed to swell the current setting towards monotheism.

The last confluent to the monotheist current which we need remark is that which assumed the character of the main stream at the beginning of the historical era, under the directing genius of Zarathustra. The Universal Faith out of which Judaism, Christianity and Islam were to take shape in succession is rightly characterised by vulgar opinion as the Worship of Fire.

We have traced the growth of the Solar Faith to the point at which the astrologers perceived that the sun's heat was even more important than its light; and was the true cause of that vegetable growth and renewal of life that had been attributed formerly to the occult influence of the Signs, and in still earlier times to the mysterious might of the Genius or Divine Man. But at this point the sun-worshippers found themselves in touch with another cult as venerable as their own. It has been said above that every advance in art and science gave rise to a new religion; and as the art of making fire was one of the most important ever learned by man, so the Fire King was never without honour. Indeed it is a confirmation of what has been pointed out before, as to the trifling importance of the sun in primitive science, that we find the Fire Genius playing a greater part in many ancient mythologies than the Genius of the Sun.

> This is especially the case in the Vedic or old Sanskrit literature, where Agni is addressed in terms that continually border on the language of monotheism.[1]

[1] See Drew's *Christ Myth*, *passim*.

However, we must beware of attaching too much importance to the language of psalmists, for whom their own God is always supreme while they are adoring him.

The same evidence that points to Light having been worshipped, or let us say, named and wondered at, first in its manifestation as the Lightning, suggests the same beginning for the Religion of Fire.

The oldest name of the Fire Genius in the North seems to be etymologically akin to *light*—it is Lok, Loke or Loki in the old Baltic manuscripts, and *Luck* [1] in the mouth of modern English-speaking men. The lightning was seen to burn the trees that it struck; the trees were also seen to have a lightning of their own inside them, when they caught fire by the grinding of their branches in the hurricane; and it was by the imitative grinding of wood against wood that man himself made fire—that he still made it in his temples in the age of Christ; that he still makes it in outlying lands to-day.[2]

The whole story is recorded in the words themselves. When lightning scathes the Norwegian forest the folk say that Loki is beating his children; and to this hour the English folk touch wood "for luck." Indeed the lightning remains an apt symbol of that Man Outside whose ways we have not fully learnt and measured, whose interference in our lives we cannot calculate, and may find good or bad.

—That Power which caused me, while at work on this very chapter, to see in the *Daily Chronicle* a review of *Primitive Psycho-Therapy and Quackery* (by R. M. Lawrence), from which I learn of "a Lincolnshire ague-charm, where the knocking of a hammer

[1] The philology of the subject is dealt with in the author's *New Word*.

[2] For Australia see Spencer and Gillen's *Northern Tribes*, 618-622.

on horse-shoes is followed by the invocation "One for God,[1] an' one for Wod, an' one for Lok.' "

It is of more importance for the history of religion to note the support given by the birth of fire to that belief or discovery already noticed under the name of animism. The flame that burst out from the log of wood, leaving a grey corpse of dust behind, was a visible soul—it may be said, a scientific one. Man had received another hint of the presence of that indwelling energy in the creation which he personified in so many ideal forms, while dimly feeling his way towards a recognition of the common nature of all his Gods.

The art of fire-making, like every art discovered by mankind, and not inherited from the instinctive stage, was probably long a mystery guarded by the wise men or wise women, who supplied the burning logs, but not the secret of kindling them, to the folk. The secret was betrayed, perhaps, by some Prometheus, who suffered from the vengeance of the wizards. Yet among many peoples it continued, and still continues, customary to maintain a sacred fire, or to have one kindled annually by a Fire-King, or priest, from which the hearth-fires of the clansmen are renewed. In the historical age the Romans still kept up the ever-living fire of Vesta, fed by its sacred nuns.

It might be possible to find farmhouses in the British Isles to-day where the kitchen fire is kept in night and day from year's end to year's end. When such fires are renewed from a communal fire, it is because the communal fire is credited with magical virtue—in a word, is *lucky*. The Vestal fire must be classed with the witches' bonfire, and the sacrificial fire of the Vedic hymns ; in short, the divine fire as

[1] The first Person of this Trinity ought not to be mistaken for the Christian "God." He is the Great God described below, pp. 191-4.

distinguished from the domestic fires whose very familiarity ended in robbing them of reverence.

Just as we have seen other cults change in character with the growth of knowledge, so did that of the mysterious fire. The discovery of the art of smelting ores and forging weapons, first of copper and afterwards of bronze and iron, by the military advantage it conferred on the discoverers, stratified the human race afresh, and introduced the historical ages of conquest and empire. So tremendous a revolution, the memory, or at least the evidence, of which was not altogether lost in the historical era,[1] must have been reflected in religion, and we must connect with it the funeral rite of cremation and the germ of the Christian doctrine of hell and purgatory.

We have only to compare the immense part played in Egyptian religion by the embalmed mummy with the hardly less striking part played by the funeral pyre in the life of the Homeric Greeks, the Scandinavian vikings and the Hindus down to the present day, to perceive that this time we are certainly in the presence of something indigenous to the North, something that Europe cannot have imported from the South, because by no possibility could such a custom have arisen in the tropics, or in a treeless land like Mesopotamia or the Delta of the Nile. The same reasons that make the sun an enemy of man in one latitude, and a friend in another, apply in a less degree to the fire. Its use in cookery is common to almost all mankind, yet a tradition of fireless races is to be met with.[2] The hearth, as

[1] See the notice of the Philistines in ch. xi. p. 237.

[2] See Max Müller's *Physical Religion*, p. 158 *et seq.* The enemies of the Aryans in Vedic times were often called *an-agni-tra*—"those who keep not the fire." Thus we read—"Agni drove away from us the enemies—tribes who keep no fire came to attack us."

the life-giving fount of necessary heat, is an institution of the Northern winter.

> The dependence of cremation on the supply of fuel has caused the rite to be abandoned, or confined to the wealthier classes, in historical times. In the same way the fashion that sprung up in England some years ago was checked by the discovery that burning was more expensive than burial.

At this point we obtain another sidelight from philology in what appears to be a connection of sound and meaning between the words *smelt* and *smith* and the naturally older word *smear*.[1] These verbal analogies run parallel with the substitution of fire for unguents in the consecration of the corpse, and the ready transfer of the title Anointed (*Messiah*, *Christos*) from the human Saviour to the celestial one. We may infer that the baptism of fire was thought of as replacing the baptism of oil, and probably at the same time thought of as purifying the deceased from sin, and, so to speak, strengthening his immortality.

Such virtue is in fact imparted to the bronze or iron by the fire of the smithy, or the smelting furnace. The process by which the pure metal is extracted from the ore, and the dross purged away, is so intimately bound up with all our notions on the subject of sin and righteousness that it is scarcely possible to write on the subject without repeating the same words. We are here at the root of Puritan morality, nay of the word *Puritan*. But that important branch of the subject may be deferred till we have finished with the Puritan theology.

[2] The learned Skeat derives all three from an Aryan stem *sma*, meaning "to rub"; and quotes from an old romance the comic expression "well anointed," that is to say, well beaten.

So far, then, we may note that the Fire Spirit has been progressively revealed as a God of Life, and of Eternal Life, as a Saviour, and as the God of Purity. The next step was for him to be revealed as the Universal God, the Spirit of all Life, present throughout the creation, in the flint as in the log, in the sun and all the bright inhabitants of heaven, in the bowels of the earth and solid core of the All-Thing.

Down to the end of the nineteenth century a solitary figure stood, year after year, beside the shores of the Caspian, in the naphtha land, and did reverence to the everlasting fire that wells up from the black and lifeless soil. He was the last of the true Persians, a Parsi from India, still keeping up the pure cult of Zarathustra on the very spot where the prophet may have found his inspiration. For while this Earth Fire must have been worshipped for ages before Zarathustra, worshipped by the first man who strayed within the terrifying sight, we have only too much reason to regard it as Zarathustra's chief point of departure, and the true source of the Puritan Faith.[1]

[1] See Marvin, *The Region of Eternal Fire*, p. 170: "What the Guebers call the Everlasting Fire is a phenomenon of a very extraordinary nature. This object of veneration lies about ten English miles north-east by east from the city of Baku, a dry, rocky land. There are several ancient temples all built of stone supposed to have all been dedicated to Fire. Among them is a little temple in which the Morrans now worship. Here are generally from forty to fifty of these poor devotees, who come on a long pilgrimage from their own country. A little way from the temple is a low cleft in the rock, in which there is a horizontal gap, two feet from the ground, nearly six long, about three broad, out of which issues a constant flame, in colour and gentleness not unlike a lamp that burns with spirit, only more fierce. When the wind blows it rises sometimes eight feet high, but much lower in still weather. This also the Indians worship and say it cannot be resisted, but, if extinguished, will rise in another place. According to James Hanway, the fire worshippers from India, who flocked in his day to Baku, had a tradition that the Eternal Fire had flamed ever since the Flood, and that it would last until the end of the world (p. 165). On the site of the modern town of Baku,

"The Persian religion was not so much a religion of Light and the Sun as of Fire, the most remarkable and important manifestation of which was of course the sun," says the last writer on the subject.[1] It is of course that a modern mind should think so. But our ideas of the relations and relative importance of the sun and earth were reversed in an age which still regarded the sun as a planet of the earth, and his orb as a disk—"bigger than the Peloponnesus" in the opinion of the daring Anaxagoras;[2] about the size of a large shield in that of plain people who were loyal to the faith of their forefathers. For such minds a volcano was a greater portent than a comet, and the earth held enough fire within its belly to furnish the substance of many suns.

> Apart from a few petty details, such as the date of Christmas, and that Eastward Position about which the advertisements for curates in the *Church Times* show much anxiety, the famous sun cult has left hardly a trace of itself in historical Christianity—of which the fear of the Earth Fire was too long the miserable mainspring.

The generalisation of Zarathustra united the older theory of the Earth Spirit, manifest in

states the Hon. George Keppel, who visited Baku in 1824, once stood a city celebrated in the time of the Guebers for its sacred temple, on the altars of which blazed perpetual fires produced by ignited naphtha. To this place thousands of pilgrims paid their annual visits till the second expedition of Heraclius against the Persians, when he wintered in these plains, and destroyed the temples of the magi, the priests of a Zoroastrian sect (p. 166).

"A few years ago a solitary figure might have been seen on the shore of the Caspian Sea, worshipping a fire springing naturally from the petroleum gas underground. The devotee was a Parsee from India—the last of a series of priests who for more than 2,500 years had tended the sacred flame upon the spot" (p. 1).

[1] Professor Arthur Drew in the *Christ Myth* (Eng. tr.), p. 98. This lack of ordinary reflection is conspicuous in a book which treats the Gospel as a plagiarism from the Agni hymns.

[2] *Diogenes Laertius*, bk ii.

vegetation, with the more recent Solar theology. Like Newton meditating on the fall of the apple, so we may imagine the Prophet of the Iranians brooding over that spectacle of the Self-born, Ever-living Fire, and reasoning from it to the fiery Might of the Sun, and the fiery Soul in all things. In whatever words he stated it, in whatever dim shape it presented itself to his inner mind, the truth revealed to Zarathustra, and revealed through him, was no other than that which was revealed again in less imaginative language to the nineteenth century. "Life is a pure flame," writes Sir Thomas Browne, in half-poetic vein. Life is a form of energy, declares modern science, and one nearly allied to heat, without which life cannot be. As the astrologers had found the sun's heat at the source of vegetable life, so Zarathustra saw fire as the source of all life. Fire was the Holy Spirit, the soul in everything, the mother element out of which the ordered world had been created, and into which it must return again. It is to all intents and purposes the creed of evolution as expounded in these latter days by Herbert Spencer.

We find the first distinct expression of this doctrine in the writings of Herakleitos of Ephesus, in the fifth century before Christ. The Greek cities of Asia Minor had just fallen under the Persian yoke, and the philosopher himself is said to have received an invitation to the court of Darius. We are therefore justified in considering him as the first interpreter of the Zarathustrian philosophy to Europe. Among the scraps of his teaching preserved by Diogenes Laertius, are sentences that betray its source: "All things are made by Fire, and into Fire shall be resolved again. All places are filled with Souls and Dæmons or

Spirits. And this great PAN, this whole Universe, will have an end. There is but one World, which World was generated by Fire, and shall again be set on Fire, and so on for all ages." (*Diog. Laert. Lives of the Philosophers*, bk. ix.)

The invasion of European Greece, and the burning of the temples, by the Persian iconoclasts raised a barrier of patriotic prejudice against the new doctrine. But two hundred years later it reappeared in Greece, and afterwards found its way to Rome, as part of the teaching of the Stoics, who combined a Puritan morality with the doctrine of a fiery ether as the Reasonable Soul of the world.[1] Such was the faith that mounted the throne of the Roman empire in the person of Marcus Aurelius, who was thus in some sort a missionary of the Catholic religion that he persecuted.

If we permit ourselves to glance for an instant from the West to the East, we shall find the same sense of the all-pervading strength of Fire in the gorgeous imagery of the Lord's Song :—

> "Beginning, middle, end nor source of Thee,
> Infinite Lord, infinite Form, I find;
> Shining, a mass of splendour everywhere,
> With discus, mace, tiara, I behold;
> Blazing as fire, as sun, dazzling the gaze
> From all sides in the sky, immeasurable . . .

[1] The Puritanism of the Stoics is well set forth by Zeller in his *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, translated by Rev. Oswald Reichel, pp. 228 and 229. The principle of the Stoic morality might be compressed into the sentence, "Only Virtue is good and Happiness consists exclusively in Virtue" (p. 229.) The individual soul bears the same relation to the soul of the universe that a part does to a whole. The human soul is not only a part, as are all living powers, of the universal power of life, but because it possesses *reason* it has a special relationship to the divine being. Just as the individual soul does not possess activity independent of the universal soul, no more can the individual soul escape the law of destiny. It, too, at the end of the world's course, will be resolved into the primary substance of the divine being (p. 217).

I see Thy Face as sacrificial fire
Blazing, its splendour burneth up the worlds . . .

On every side, all-swallowing, fiery tongued,
Thou lickest up mankind, devouring all ;
Thy glory filleth space ; the universe
Is burning, Vishnu, with Thy blazing rays.
—*Bhagavad Gîtâ* (Mrs. Besant's trans.)

And while Krishna or Vishnu was thus revealing himself in his fiery shape to the Hindu psalmist, far away in the extreme north-west of Europe the skalds were giving utterance to a mystic prophecy of the downfall of the Æsir Gods, and the destruction of the world by fire.

Throughout all this language, and all these prophecies and philosophies, we seem to trace the same feeling ; they are the varied response of the human spirit to the Heat Wave, which was about to overwhelm the world. The Hindu feels it as a Divine Event already happening, and always happening, a process rather than an event, the everlasting Life of God. The Greek feels it more faintly as a regular culmination of a regular evolution, repeated forever. The Northman faces it as a dim, unexplained catastrophe. The Persian alone was taught by his prophet to look forward to it with hope and confidence, as the *dénouement* of a Divine epic, the triumph of Good over Evil, the redemption of the righteous and the damnation of their foes.

2. *The Heat Wave*

What renders the proclamation of the Puritan Faith the most remarkable and most important of all the recorded revolutions of mankind is its coincidence with a planetary change of which it proved to be the almost literal prediction.

A popular English novelist has sketched imaginary changes brought about in human nature through the introduction of a new gas into the earth's atmosphere by means of a comet. It is strictly within the province of scientific imagination to see some connection between great movements of the human mind and extraordinary variations in the amount of energy dispensed to us by the fiery heart of our system, Almighty Lord of all planetary life. A science of solar meteorology has not yet been born, and we can only pronounce it as probable in the light of all our knowledge of the universe that the sun has its systole and diastole, and our summers and winters are measured out to us less regularly than the exact science of rectangular minds may be willing to allow.

Leaving the realm of reasonable hypothesis for that of actual experience, it is historically certain that the climate of the Mediterranean world has altered with the transitions between the tropical and glacial ages, to whatever cause those changes may be attributable. Within a period that some geologists have reckoned as only thirty thousand years,[1] Europe has passed from the condition of Greenland to that of the most habitable region of the globe, the chief seat of population and civilisation, arms and arts, science and literature. And the change can be seen going on intermittently through the last two or three thousand years of the historical record. Iceland was only colonised, or recolonised, in the eighth Christian century. The northern part of the continent has emerged from barbarism since the time of Christ, and the

[1] See Geikie's *The Great Ice Age*, p. 812 *et seq.*, where the question of the chronology of the Glacial Period is very fully discussed. The theory most favoured is that of Dr. Croll: "The extreme glaciation would have terminated about 80,000 years ago."

sceptre of civilisation has passed slowly, through many vicissitudes, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic shores. There seem to be definite limits of temperature favourable to human activity, and this philanthropic zone has advanced within historical memory from the latitude of Thebes and Benares to that of London and Berlin.

Gibbon has noticed the change in the climate of the Mediterranean since the age of the Cæsars, though he has not, perhaps, given it enough prominence among the causes of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Among the other causes that have contributed to the same result, many can be distinctly classed as secondary and derivative. Thus the Gulf Stream, which moderates the temperature of Britain, is itself a creature of the sun. Again, the restless stirring of the northern tribes from the Atlantic to the Pacific, who fell upon the Roman world, looks as though they had been roused, like bears awakening from their winter sleep, by the same increase of warmth that exhausted the nations whom they invaded.

> On the other hand the later northward rush of the Arabs has been explained as due to an unprecedented drought. But it is enough to point out the evident part played by climatic changes in history without attempting to make them responsible for everything.

We have seen some reason for regarding weather wisdom as the mother of prophecy. Whether the historical era was marked by any sudden increase of temperature, amounting to a natural portent, that impressed the prophetic consciousness, is a question on which we need more evidence in order to discuss it with profit. It may be more reasonable to conjecture that the human thermometers were influenced unawares by a feeling of some im-

pending catastrophe, which ultimately found expression in the famous Christian prophecy of the destruction of the world by fire. This may be considered as the philosophy of Heraclitus and the Stoics in a popular version; but if our text of the Parsi scriptures can be trusted, it reproduced the original teaching of Zarathustra, and it is the true accents of the Aryan prophet that we hear again from the lips of John the Baptist:—

"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? . . . And now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. . . .

"He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.

"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (*Matthew* iii. 7-12.)

What is truly significant, what is truly mysterious and divine, is to find the prophecy fulfilled no less in the spiritual than in the material sphere. The human spirit did receive a baptism of fire that cleansed it of many a foul and frightful superstition, that melted the gyves of Time, and burnt up the chaff and debris accumulated from the lake village and the Stone Age. There is truth in the remark by the author of the *Age of Reason* that "Christianity laid all waste." Yet was not he himself toiling valiantly to lay feudal Europe waste, in that French conflagration whose burning seeds he had first fanned in the New World? There was no other way. There are diseases that only amputation can get rid of; there are infections that only flame can purge. Is it not written in the History of that conflagration, according to the prophet Carlyle, that a Lie, last

it ever so long, must go down burning into the abyss at last ? When civilisation sets Jesus the Nazarene on a gibbet, and Caligula on a throne, it is time for it to be laid waste.

Our era is too like the Christian one, our society too like that of Antioch, our empires are too like that of Rome, for the thoughtful man not to apprehend, and for the prophet not to denounce, and even to demand, a parallel catastrophe. The apotheosis of Humanity is a denial of the Creator. And while lip service is done to this false god, the effectual worship of mankind goes forth to Mammon in the shape of the successful gambler, to Ashtaroth in the triumphant whore, and to Moloch in every spiritual bastard who inherits power without ability. The Divine Man is only tolerated in the tomb ; and while the prophets are invoked with stately sepulchres, the prudent Annas and the well-meaning Caiphas from their palaces preside over their stagnant ritual to the satisfaction of the money-changers.

It is in vain to explore the scripture of time unless we can find there a lesson for our present need. We have a symbol to interpret, written in more living words than any creed named after Nice or Athanasius ; a Revelation more lurid than any seen on the isle of Patmos. No such Divine Mystery was played out before on our planet, nor did such Hero perform in such Tragedy.

3. *The White Prophet*

The name which stands at the head of the great Reformation of Paganism is that of Zarathustra, whose life and character, if not his doctrine, are as much overlaid by legend as those of Jesus the Nazarene. The date assigned by tradition or conjecture for his advent wavers from 6000 to

600 B.C. ;[1] he is given two birthplaces, is tempted by the devil, and receives his revelation at the age of thirty years. He is variously described as the founder and the reformer of the Puritan Faith, the religion of those whom the Greek writers call Magicians (*Magi*), and in whom we may recognise the same sacred caste of Divine Men, sunk to be hereditary priests, that we meet as Brahmans in Hindustan, and as Levites in the history of Israel. It has been conjectured that the name Zarathustra itself was an hereditary priestly title, something like that of Pharaoh ; and that the Puritan prophet has been credited with the achievements of his predecessors.

These discrepancies of date, however, lose their importance in the light of the astrological history, or evolution of the Solar Faith, as it has been outlined above. We have seen some reason to think that the Iranians, or Aryans of the Oxus,[1] may have acknowledged the sun as the Ruler of Heaven as far back as the fifth millennium before Christ. On the other hand these same Iranians, under the new name of *Persians* or *Parsis*, burst forth as conquerors on Western Asia in the sixth century before the Christian era. Like the Arabs a thousand years afterwards, they seem to march

[1] On the date of Zoroaster I may refer to Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson, who, in his work *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, fully discusses the question. He draws the following conclusions (pp. 174-176) : "Date. From the actual evidence presented and the material accessible, one is fairly enabled, at least on the present merits of the case, to accept the period between the latter half of the seventh century and the middle of the sixth century B.C. (perhaps still better between the middle of the seventh century and the first half of the sixth century B.C.), or just before the rise of the Achæmenian power, as the approximate date of Zoroaster's birth." Similar results have been reached by others, for example, Hauq, Justi, and Casartelli. Monsignor De Hartiz finds no reason to fix the Avesta earlier than 600 or 700 B.C.

[2] "Zoroaster's youth was certainly passed in Western Iran."—Jackson, *op cit.*, p. 205.

as apostles of a new religion, and to derive their impetus from the same proselytising and iconoclastic zeal, not staying till they had slain the sacred Bull in Memphis and set fire to the Acropolis of Athens.[1]

> Underlying the external history of the Persians there is evidence of an internal conflict between the new religion, or at least the Magical caste, and the military dynasty. Thus the Magi took advantage of the absence of King Cambyses in Egypt to raise one of their own caste to the throne, giving out that he was the king's brother Smerdis. And the brief reign of Smerdis was signalised by an outbreak of iconoclastic zeal, in the true Puritan vein, against the gods of the conquered Babylonians.[2]

The slight glimpses that we are afforded into the life and work of Zarathustra show him as finding himself in the presence of two rival cults, or groups of cults, the worship of Ahura and the worship of the Dævas, or Devils; and as coming forward with a commission from the Mighty God, in Persian *Ahura-Mazda*, to put down the Devil-worshippers. The misunderstanding about his era is therefore easily put right. The worship of Ahura probably did date from as far back as 5000 B.C. But its proclamation as the exclusive faith, and its final triumph over the rival Pagan cults, may well have been due to the prophet of the sixth or seventh century B.C., who figures in the Parsi scriptures under the name of Zarathustra. His work consisted in giving a new and more intense development to the monotheism of the astro-

[1] Herodotus, III. 29, and VIII. 53.

[2] According to Dunker, *Hist. of Antiquity*, vol. vi, pp. 194-195, although no active persecution took place the usurper did not support the worship of Bel Marduk and the other gods of Babylon as Cyrus had done.

logers by identifying the cults of Light and Fire, while grouping all the other worships of the world together as cults of demons engaged in warfare against the God of Righteousness.

The date thus arrived at coincides with that of the reformation of the Zodiac, described above. That reformation substituted geometrical divisions for the old animal Signs, and we can now see that the change was partly inspired by Puritan zeal against idolatry. It struck a blow at the worship of the stars, as well as of the Beast.

> A very striking parallel is afforded in the history of the Aegean, where the introduction of cremation, and of iron, was accompanied by the adoption of geometrical ornaments, about 1500 B.C. (Myres, *Dawn of History*, p. 175.) Already the connection is visible between the Worship of Fire and Puritanism.

Thus that codification of religion which the priests and philosophers had failed to carry out was effectually taken in hand by the prophet of the White Race, and indelibly associated with its moral sentiment. The priests had failed for much the same reason that the legal profession fails to construct a rational system of law. The authority of a legislator is needed to get rid of all the bad precedents, and boldly recast ancestral rules in accordance with modern needs. In the work of religious reform there is even greater need of one who can teach with authority, and not as the scribes. The philosophers had failed, not so much in theory as in practice. They had failed as evangelists. The theology of Plato was like the legislation he elaborated for his ideal republic. The principal objection to both was that nobody wanted them. It was like music written for an instrument that has not yet been invented. Plato

drew his inspiration from the same source as Ezra, but he drew the light without the heat.

The reason why Zarathustra was able to cut the Gordian knot of mythology, and to impose his commandments on the conscience of a great part of mankind, is because he appealed to men's passions as well as to their reason. He enlisted the aboriginal instinct of Fear in the service of the God whose name is Jealousy.[1] He gave men something to hate, as well as something to adore, and identified the service of God with a crusade against the Devil. It is the Prophet of Fire who speaks through the mouth of a Christian bishop to the King of the Franks: "Adore what thou hast burned; burn what thou hast adored."[2] The first commandment in the Hebrew Decalogue was elaborated by the collective conscience of the Western world; the second commandment is the peculiar testament of Zarathustra, and like a mark branded on cattle, it still stamps his iconoclastic followers. The Persians, we learn from Herodotus, thought it foolish to suppose that the Gods had a human shape. The Fire Spirit has no such shape, and no graven image can be true to him.

> The correspondence between Muhammadan and Protestant feeling on the subject of idolatry has often been remarked, as well as the ease with which this prohibition was accepted by nations without artistic genius.

We must remark only one other feature of the Zoroastrian reforms, and that is the suppression of cremation, the very rite out of which the

[1] Thou shalt worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.—Exodus xxxiv. 14.

[2] Saint Remigius addressing Clovis at his baptism. The words are cited from Gregory of Tours, by Gibbon, ch. xxxviii.

Puritan Faith grew. The fire was now too holy to be polluted by a corpse,—such is the not very satisfactory reason offered by the Parsis. The dividing line between prehistoric and historic Fire-worship comes out clearly in two recent books on India, by a Hindu and a Muslim, each of whom has a religious grievance against the British government. The first reproaches it with putting down widow burning; the second with not having put it down earlier.

We have seen that the tendency to proselytise is inherent in monotheism. It is evident as early as the fifteenth century before Christ, in the history of the Aten cult in Egypt, and we shall come across it again in the history of Queen Jezebel of Samaria. The prophet of the seventh century, therefore, cannot be considered as the first inventor of religious intolerance. What he did was to formulate it as a principle, to declare it as the first of moral duties, and to supply it with fresh energy by the terrific doctrine of the everlasting fire. It was to save themselves from the infernal fire that the Catholics lit earthly fires for the Protestants—with greater Protestantism. The mainspring of what is sometimes called the Nonconformist Conscience is not love of God, but fear of God and hatred of the Devil.

4. *The Devil*

The history of Satan is coeval with that of God; indeed, we have seen reason to think that it was the Divine Adversary who first received distinct recognition and worship from man. Magic did, in fact, have the character of the religion of Evil, although the primitive wizard appears rather as the master of the demons than as their minister.

We have remarked the opposition between good and evil powers latent in natural theology; in the celestial sphere it was symbolised by the warfare of Daylight with Darkness and of Summer with Winter. The Moon was like a set stage on which the drama of the alternative victory of light and darkness was played in miniature each month before the mortal spectators. It is little better than learned trifling to look back now and try to distinguish among the roots of so universal a conception; identifying this mythological figure with Night and that with Winter, or confounding the Egyptian Set with Typhon and both with the Babylonian Tiamat.

These natural phenomena harmonised with man's sense of sin and suffering. The Universal Mystery is one, and the Power that steals its light from the moon and its warmth from the sun is the same Power that thwarts the hopes and strivings of man, and heaps ashes upon the fires of youth. Such is the sentiment that underlies mythology, and causes ancient hymns to the sun to take on the character of psalms of holiness, and the lamentations for the slain Genius of the Corn to become the litany of sinners.

The unity of Satan was the shadow cast by the unity of God. Zarathustra was perhaps the first prophet to formulate the two ideas as correlatives, and to represent them by the famous myth of the Twin Creators, Ormuzd and Ahriman, engaged in a sempiternal struggle for the mastery of the All-Thing and of the soul of man. These figures are the first draft of the Christian God and Devil; and the peculiar moral features given to the portrait of Ahriman by the Puritan theology have been impressed so deeply on the Christian conscience that Zarathustra is to this hour the lawgiver of Europe and America.

To put it shortly, the Devil of the Puritan Faith is the God of the Vital Faith, or cult of the Generative Power. We have remarked the necessary effect of the discovery of the sun, in reducing the old agricultural cults to the rank of village superstitions, and in the end to village games. In this last stage they were found by the Puritan revival known to history as the Protestant Reformation; and the English Puritans of the seventeenth century betrayed their Zarathustrian strain by opening at full cry on the May games and Morris dances of the peasantry, like hounds picking up a scent.

> In the same way we may compare the prehistoric overthrow of the Divine Kingship by the King of Heaven, with the republican spirit of the Calvinists.

But the vegetation cults generally were bound up with another that did not lie so directly in the path of solar discovery. Indeed, in the Mystery of Birth the influence of the moon is far more obvious than that of the sun.

> I must reluctantly reserve the thorough examination of this truly vital branch of theology for another volume. That I should be required to do so by the conditions that govern the publication of books in the twentieth century is a striking testimony to the living power of the Aryan Moses.

The likeness between animal and vegetable life, as far as reproduction is concerned, is sufficiently apparent for the cults of Generation and Vegetation to have been amalgamated in many temples of the Pagan world; and the magical ceremonies proper to each were practised, as it were, for the joint benefit. It is not always possible for the modern student to tell whether a God of Increase, like Yahveh, or a Mother Goddess, like

Cybele, was in the first place a Vegetable or Animal Genius. The two cults naturally met in the religion of the Farmer. We are on firmer ground in deducing from the evidence of contemporary village life in Hindustan that the most popular religion of the Hindu peasantry is the cult of the Creator worshipped under the symbol of Fatherhood, and by the name of the Great God (Mahadeo or Mahades).

The rival claims of the Divine Father and the Divine Mother to be regarded as the true Beginner of Life, bound up as they were with the practical question of inheritance in the male or female line, were decided in favour of the stronger sex, if Hindu legend can be trusted, by a war known as the War of the Linggam and the Yoni. In many other parts of the world the Divine Parents were worshipped side by side.

In the eye of scientific theology the analogy between the Life cults is incomplete. The cult of vegetable life and of the life of domestic animals belong to the religion of self-preservation. The cult of human life belongs rather to the religion of altruism, and its true symbol is the Divine Child.

The great polarisation of religion by Zarathustra proceeded on a different principle ; nor can we feel surprise that he should have overlooked a distinction that has been equally overlooked by more modern students of comparative theology. Over a great part of the world, and particularly among the Aryans, the cults of life in its various forms were blended in a general Nature worship which approached the character of Monotheism. By the European rustic, of whom history tells us so little, the all-pervading Spirit of Life was worshipped generally under the form of a goat, and the Greek writers are found using the word

PAN as the proper name of the Great God, figured as a goat-man, and as a term equivalent to Nature.

This use of the word throws a light upon the course of the Puritan evolution. We see two rival theories of creation in presence of each other, an elder one that identified the Creator with his creatures on earth, and a younger one that identified him with the King in Heaven.

There is some evidence that these opposed scientific theories, or religions, came into sharp conflict in the region of the Oxus, more than fifteen hundred years before Christ. That is about the period of the first historical outbreak of monotheistic zeal in the Aten propaganda [1] and it is also the epoch accepted roughly for the first appearance of the Aryans in the north-west of the Indian peninsula. The suggestion has been made by others that this migration was due to a religious schism among the Iranians, and such an explanation accords only too well with the whole subsequent history of the Puritan Faith. The sun is conspicuous by his pettiness in the Rig Veda hymns, in which he is subordinate to the old Daylight God, Varuna.[2] Still more significant is the exchange of meanings by which the same Aryan word, *ahura* or *asura*, is used for god by the Parsis and for devil by the Hindus, while *daeva* or *deva* means devil in Persia and god in India. The supreme Daeva, worshipped by the Hindus as Mahades and execrated by the Parsis as Ahriman, is the Natural Creator.

However, the roots of an old faith are not easily pulled up. The revolution, of which we

[1] See below, p. 220.

[2] In the Vedic mythology the Sun is quite overshadowed by Agni, the god of Fire and Light, and becomes quite subordinate to him.—Max Müller's *Physical Religion*, p. 144, etc.

thus catch a glimpse, be it real or fallacious, in the mists of the past, seems to have spent its force before the historical era; and the old Paganism had regained some ground. When Zarathustra came on the scene a thousand years later he found the worship of the *daevas* still flourishing alongside of the worship of Ahura, and his bitter complaints on the subject are preserved in the Parsi scriptures.[1] We must see in him the Calvin of the solar faith, the reformer rather than the founder of the theology which he launched on a world-wide career. The triumphs of the Assyrian Sun-God paved the way for the Puritan Faith among the Semites, and we shall see the most celebrated of all the Gods of man transformed from the likeness of Mahades into that of Ahura-Mazda before coming into Europe to be the God of the White Race.

The Divine Adversary or Accuser makes but a faint and fitful figure in the Hebrew scriptures, though he is rather more prominent in the Talmud. The true explanation probably is that the Jewish mind was too powerfully impressed by the majesty of Jehovah to be able to conceive him as battling with a rival on equal terms. At the same time it is noteworthy that Jehovah himself was identified with the Evil Principle by some Christian or pseudo-Christian sects, including the Paulicians, who inspired the Albigensian movement.[2]

The Christian Fathers followed the lead of Zarathustra in treating the Pagan Gods as evil spirits, who had artfully seduced mankind to worship them; and this idea is embraced by Milton. But among them all the one signalled out by a true instinct of the Church as the Arch-

[1] Sacred Books of the East, Zend-Avesta, *passim*.

[2] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, ch. liv.

Enemy was the God of Nature, and the horns and hoofs of the Divine Goat still enter into the portrait of Satan which is familiar to every Christian child. (The barbed tail seems to be a reminiscence of Lok.)

The most striking testimony to the former importance of this cult in the north of Europe is afforded by language. As the Christian missionary of our own day is accustomed to translate the Divine Name by the word already in use among his heathen hearers for the Good Spirit or spirits,[1] so the monks who evangelised Europe outside the Roman pale were obliged to take over the designation already associated in the mind of the folk with the God of Love. Among the Slaves from the Danube to the White Sea the Christian Deity bears the name of *Bog*, a word identified by philologists with the French *bouc* (he-goat), the Swedish *bock* (he-goat), the English *buck* and many similar forms. And all the analogies point to a similar connection between the Teutonic words for *goat* and GOD.

> Philologists are practically unanimous in rejecting the derivation from *good*, although I cannot help thinking that the latter word with its associations must have influenced the form and meaning of the divine name. As usual the phonetic method breaks down in dealing with a problem in significs. The only origin suggested for goat is an Aryan stem *gaidha*, to play (?) and for God a Teutonic *gutha*. I have little doubt in my own mind that both words are of the same stock as *ghost*, and like the related phonetic form *yeast*, reach back to the perception of nervous energy, better known to the vulgar as "go."

As the genealogy of the Devil has been very

[1] In some cases the name of evil spirits (where they appear as destroyers and renewers of creation) has been adopted to render "God." Ratzel, *History of Mankind* (Eng. tr.), i., 51.

imperfectly recorded, I may be allowed to adduce a curious scrap of evidence in addition to that given above, and in the *New Word* (xviii. 4 and xxi. 1). I write these lines within a short walk of a hostelry with the enigmatic name of the Bald-faced Stag. In the poetical mythology which flourished in Northern Europe on the eve of its conversion to Christianity a prominent figure is Balder the Beautiful, a youthful God of Love, having some resemblance to Adonis. The explanation is that the word *bald* originally meant "horned," or more generally, branching and budding. Horned gods and goddesses are common in mythology,[1] and the meaning now borne by the word *buck* in English, together with superstitions like that of Herne the Hunter, indicate that the stag sometimes received the honours of the goat. But the God of Nature is also the God of Beer, the goatskin is the oldest wine-barrel, and goat-footed satyrs formed the train of Dionysus. The Bald-faced Stag is the Sign of Bacchus, and this inn is really the Devil's Head.

Zarathustra is fairly entitled to the praise, if praise it be, of being the first architect of the Universal Faith. Unfortunately he and his followers ever since have mistaken it for a Catholic faith. Yet the shallow and misleading characterisation of the Twin Powers as Good and Evil, Light and Dark, deprived the Puritan creed from the beginning of any claim on the general acceptance of mankind. It was the creed of the strong man, and the northern zone, and its history is that of a blind and ruthless crusade against the faiths of weaker souls and more southern latitudes.

In the tropics Night is the refuge and the saviour of suffering humanity from the devouring

[1] Compare the horned Moses of the Vulgate and of Michel Angelo's statue.

Day; and the Black man cannot welcome the tidings that he wears the Devil's livery—or that he lies under the curse of Ham. It says something for the Catholic Churches that the Devil is not mentioned in their formal creeds; and the Roman missionaries in Africa are said by travellers to do less harm to the natives they convert than is done by the Protestants. The thoughtless English missionaries found themselves obliged to strike out of their hymn-books the description of Heaven as "one sacred, high, eternal noon." Perhaps some similar language strengthened the opposition of the old Egyptians to the Aten Disk.

It is this natural difference of feeling between north and south that comes out in the respective attitudes of the first Christians and of the heathen world generally towards the Baptism of Fire. In the philosophy of Zarathustra the ultimate triumph of the Righteous One, involving the end of the present creation, and the renewal of the world by fire, was an event to be looked forward to with gladness by the worshippers of the Mighty God. In this spirit it is announced as an impending event by the first Christian evangelists. The tidings of the wrath to come, and the destruction of the world, are Good Tidings for the children of Light, if they are bad tidings for the wicked.

Such as it was, the creed of Zarathustra may be called the passage from mythology to theology. As we draw nearer to monotheism poetry turns into prose, and the vague superlatives formerly applied to every God in turn by the ecstasy of worship, are transcribed in logical formularies and accepted as scientific definitions. It is hard to say how far the White prophet regarded Ormuzd as a "person," to employ the term of Christian orthodoxy, and how far as an impersonal power. The influence of the ancient fire cult is manifest

here. The sacred fire was divine in itself; it was a fetish, not an idol; and hence the figure of the Mighty God remained vague and indefinite as the flame that was his symbol.

It was left for the worshippers of Yahweh to reduce this lofty conception to the stature of humanity, and to shape, not indeed a material idol, but that naive mental image of an Almighty Wizard that the European Folk has worshipped ever since.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

The bestowal of the name Puritan upon the English revival of the Zarathustrian morality is one of those significant coincidences, or Universal Rhymes, which teach us how small our universe is. For the English word *fire* is but another spelling of the same ancient European word that meets us in the Greek *pur* (fire), and the Latin *purus* (bright, clean), from which our word *pure* is directly copied.[1]

The people who appear in history in the sixth century before Christ as the Persians or Parsis were formerly known to themselves as Aryans or Iranians, and it is in keeping with all we know of the history of religious and of national names to suppose that the new designation marks their conversion to the Religion of Fire, as preached by Zarathustra, and that their word for fire is embodied in the word *Parsi*. Be that as it may, it is impossible to overlook the evident likeness of sound and meaning between *Parsi* and *Pharisee*. Persia is called *Fars* by the Arabs. Its former name was Elam.

As we shall see clearly in the following chapters, the Jews who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah brought back with them a very different religion to the ancient Yahweh-worship. In the second part of Isaiah the great Persian conqueror, Cyrus, is hailed as the shepherd and the Messiah of Yahweh,[2] who must therefore be

[1] Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary*, under Fire, Pure, and Puritan.

[2] That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd (Isaiah xliv. 28). Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus (xlv. 1).

identified in this writer's mind with the Mighty God of the northern invaders. Under Persian protection the Jewish republic flourished for centuries, and its troubles began with the overthrow of the Fire-worshippers and the advent of Hellenism. The Seleucid kings of Syria successfully proselytised among their Jewish subjects, a high-priest, Onias-Menelaus, publicly went over to Hellenism, and the Pagan worship threatened to replace that of Yahweh in the temple of Jerusalem. The apostacy of the Jews became so general that, we are informed by Josephus, the Samaritans indignantly renounced all connection with them, and claimed to be of Persian descent. (*Antiquities*, xii. 3).

At this moment, when the name of Hellene had become the badge of the apostate Jews, and the name Persian that of those who denounced them, a fanatical party arose among the Jews themselves, who rebelled against the Seleucid kings and ultimately, under the leadership of the Maccabees, succeeded in restoring the independence of the nation, and the purity of its worship. The members of this party called themselves the Brethren (Hebrew, *haberim*), so that the famous name of Pharisees (Greek, *pharisaioi*) has all the appearance of a nickname (like Christian, Methodist and Puritan itself), bestowed on the party by its enemies.

> It is perfectly natural that the Pharisees should have sought and found another origin for their name in the Hebrew word *perusim* (set apart), but perhaps it is a little rash on the part of Hebrew scholars to accept their account of the matter. And, after all, does not the purifying fire "set apart"?—so that the difference is nominal indeed.

However, their name is not required as evidence of the Persian affinities of the sect reproved with

such peculiar bitterness by Jesus the Nazarene. When we read that the father of the Maccabees began his revolt by slaying a Jew who was offering a heathen sacrifice, we feel that the true Puritan spirit is at work, to " set apart " its neighbour as well. All the marks that distinguished the Pharisees from the more orthodox Sadducees in Gospel times are thoroughly Zarathustrian ; their minute scrupulousness, ending in hypocrisy ; their hatred of Paganism and all its emblems, down to the imperial coins ; their belief in angels and demons, and in the resurrection of the dead ; their proselytising zeal, and their intractable temper shown equally as martyrs and as persecutors ; and their absorption in prophecies of the coming judgment, and the appearance of the Messiah.

Most of these features of the Jewish Pharisee are reproduced in the English Puritan, like those of the father in the child. Jesus the Nazarene has hardly been hated less in Evangelical England and Presbyterian Scotland than he was when he walked with his disciples through the cornfields on the Sabbath Day.

> " We struggled for over thirty years against calumny, vilification, and even threats before we got our petition sanctioned by Parliament for the opening of the museums. We were called atheists, Sabbath-breakers, and I don't know what besides," is the testimony of the late Mr. R. M. Morell, the worthy founder of the National Sunday League.

Was it the Aryan element in Judaism, and hence in Christianity, that appealed to the Aryan blood in a far disparted branch of the White race, and stimulated the Protestant revolt against the Papal Church ; and is it this which gives the Pharisaic books of the Bible their peculiar power over the conscience of the Dutch family of

nations? Half our sectarian differences seem as purely racial as light and dark hair. When the Puritan rebellion broke out in the seventeenth century it revealed a rift running through England from York to Southampton between the shires whose blood was predominantly Dutch, and those whose blood was predominantly Welsh. The influence of climate only is stronger than race, because it is the parent of race. The decay of Protestantism in Britain, and the revival of the Pictish nationalities, are not unconnected with the increasing mildness of the British climate.

Morality is related to theology much as art is to science. We are now prepared to find that the distinguishing traits of Puritan morality, which have given to it its evil and unique renown, are its militant spirit and its morbid antipathy to everything pertaining to the Generation cults.

We catch a foretaste of this antipathy in the enforced celibacy of the priestesses of the sacred fire in Rome, a rule in striking contrast with that of other Pagan priesthoods. Chastity is the supreme virtue in the code of Zarathustra.[1] The Puritan, whether in his medieval avatar as Dominican inquisitor, or in his modern one as Anglo-Saxon Methodist, is the executioner of the Fire God, and his atrocities on behalf of his favourite tapu show that he deems cruelty a far lesser sin than unregulated love.

As there is no subject more important to human happiness than this, and none on which everything written by the scribes reveals so much mental confusion, I must try to set in a clear light the fundamental difference between the Puritan morality and that which subsists side by side with it in the Christian Churches.

[1] On Zoroaster and chastity see Fargards xviii and xix of Zend-Avesta, Darmsteter's trans. (*Sacred Books of the East*).

We have seen the rude beginnings of ethical legislation in the attempts of the primitive clan to adapt its behaviour to the will, or supposed will, of the deceased Wizard or Divine Father. At every stage of human evolution the Darwinian law of natural selection is at work on behalf of the clan whose habits and rules of conduct are in fact conducive to health and wealth; and thus the clan that has triumphed over its neighbours in the struggle for existence has every reason for worshipping the Genius, whether medicine man, or king, or lawgiver, who taught it how to live. Primitive man did not pretend that there was any difference between overcoming your neighbour by the use of better food, or better weapons; by abstaining from wine, or exchanging flint for bronze. Moral and military rules were alike means to an end, and that end was the making of a successful hunter, fisherman, and, above all, soldier—in short, a good clansman. We may be able to see a distinction between those habits and customs which represent man's natural heritage, and those which he adopted or imposed on himself, as the outcome of experience and reason. The Roman lawyers draw such a distinction between those things which are wrong in themselves (*mala in se*), and those which are wrong because they are forbidden by Act of Parliament (*mala prohibita*). But the savage code is of one texture throughout. Everything is commanded or forbidden or allowed by Yahweh himself, from the pattern of the priest's robe to the fine for murder. The law is a covenant between the clan and its divine Protector. There is a pattern in the savage mind—like that which Plato thought was in the Divine Mind—and man tried to make himself in the image and likeness of his God.

The process began at birth. The savage's

belief that the shebear licks her cubs into shape is an index to his own ideas of a mother's duty. The European mother still works to flatten back her children's ears, and the Chinese to stunt her daughter's foot. The Red Indian squeezes the soft skull of her babe into the mould approved of by the tribal conscience. And traces of the same drastic treatment are to be found among more civilised peoples.

> A friend from the island of Chios, Mr. P. Chrysoveloni, has shown me a portrait of his grandfather, a hero of the Greek War of Independence, wearing a hat peculiar to the island ; his explanation being that the islanders have " melon-shaped " heads, which make it difficult for them to wear hats made elsewhere. As I was walking through the streets of Athens with the same friend (in the year 1908), he pointed out the profile of an officer seated in a café, with the remark,—" You can see he is an Albanian by the straight back of his head."

Such were the methods, older even than totem marks, and tattooing, and tartans, by which the primitive tribe was made a peculiar people. They were not more cruel, perhaps they were much less cruel, than the similar crushing of the minds of the young which goes on in our midst, with the deliberate purpose of making them insane on the subject of religion.

The beginning of the historical period, marked by the overthrow of the divine kingship, is marked by a general movement of national legislation. In Jerusalem there is the feigned discovery in the temple of a code piously attributed to Moses ; in Athens Drakon and Solon legislate in succession ; Sparta at a rather earlier date is reorganised by Lukourgos ; and the fall of the Roman kings is promptly followed by the appointment of the Decemvirs to draw up the Law of the Twelve

Tables. In most of these cases legislation is seen slipping out of the hands of the priesthood into that of the laity ; nevertheless efforts are made to keep up the old religious sanctions. The laws are confirmed by oaths, and Lukourgos having bound the Spartans not to alter his code till he returns, withdraws from the kingdom and returns no more.[1]

The Spartan code illustrates the aims and character of Puritan morality ; and as we are told that Lukourgos drew it up as the result of foreign travel and the study of foreign institutions, it may be that he, like Ezra, derived part of his inspiration from Zarathustrian sources. His code is essentially a military one ; his law is martial law. He succeeded in creating a clan of Puritan communists, that bullied the rest of Greece for two or three centuries, and has received much more attention than it deserved from historians, owing to the damage which envy prompted it to inflict on Athens. To this day the note of Puritanism has remained the same. It is the morality of prudent selfishness and worldliness. What it pretends to call self-indulgence is really self-injury. The prizefighter training for a fight lives according to the straitest precepts of the Nonconformist Conscience. Its aim is success in life, whether success in battle or success in business. A Christian minister not long ago preached a sermon to the boy prisoners in one of our gaols, on the text : " It does not pay to go wrong." Those words are a satire on the life and death of Jesus Christ. They are the perfect expression of Puritan morality. The Quakers and the Parsis are the most prosperous communities in the world.

Over against this morality we find another which is constantly confounded with it, which is

[1] Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus.*

like it in many of its precepts and practices, but which springs from a quite different source, and has a quite opposite aim. As Zarathustra is peculiarly identified with Puritanism, so is the Buddha with Asceticism. But it is scarcely necessary to say that the Ascetic morality, like the Puritan, has its roots in the primeval past.[1]

As Puritanism begins from birth, so Asceticism begins from death. The simplest origin to assign for it is the practice of putting to death the aged members of the clan, a practice still in vogue among the isles of the Pacific in the nineteenth century and the wild European tribes of the ninth.[2] Whether we attribute this institution to magical or economical motives, it is clearly one that has much to commend it. Like the corresponding practice of infanticide among the Chinese, and that sanctioned by English law, of extinguishing monsters in the moment of birth, it relieves the commonwealth of a burden which can only be borne at the expense of suffering to the strong. The sums spent by ourselves on luxurious asylums for the hopelessly insane, including the criminally insane, would go far to provide the children of our slums with air to breathe and bread to eat. There is something truly shocking in the sight of great

[1] The name of "asceticism" strictly belongs to the *training* of the physical and mental faculties of the devotee, for the purpose of acquiring spiritual powers, such as those possessed or claimed by the Hindu yogis. But what we are here concerned with is the principle, as it underlies Christian morality.

[2] "The inhabitants of the village of Herselt relate that on the occasion of a war a great multitude of Kaboutermannekens came into their neighbourhood. They took up their abode near to the village, in the middle of a large forest in which there were several caverns. They frequently came to the village, to fetch one thing or other, but without harm to anyone. When their women grew old they caused them to descend into a pit, with a milk-loaf [cheese ?] in their hand, and then carefully closed up the pit's mouth. The peasants say that the women were very contented with this kind of death, and were by no means forced to it." Thorpe's *North. Myth.*, iii, 187, quoting Wolf *Niederländische Sagan*, Leipsig, 1843.

wealth in the clutch of aged, imbecile and paralytic hands. Civilisation is visibly sinking under the baleful influence of these distorted ideals.

The primeval custom of homicide was softened into that of exposure, in the case of the aged as well as of the young. The Hindu householder or paterfamilias was enjoined by his religious law to resign his authority into the hands of his successor, on reaching a certain age, and to retire into the woods to prepare for death.[1] The abstinence originally enforced upon an aged recluse by his own feebleness and the difficulty of procuring food, became a meritorious abstinence pleasing to the Gods; and thus a means of salvation.

In every society, as we see from day to day, there are moral weaklings, sufferers from the disease which we do not explain when we call it neurasthenia. This weariness of life is perhaps a true vocation, as the Roman Church calls it, a divine call to quit life; and it is difficult to decide whether the Catholics have been guilty of greater wickedness in immuring in their convents many who had no true vocation, or the Protestants in compelling those who had one to go forth into the world in order that they should transmit their disease to future generations. The influence of magical beliefs is clearly present in the adoption by many of these poor creatures of a life of prayer. When on the other hand they devote themselves to the service of the sick and poor we may hope with the author of the Letter of James, that they have found a pure religion.

The essential difference between the morality of the Puritan and the Ascetic, therefore, is that the

[1] Sir Henry Maine connects this custom with the provision in the Laws of Manu for the division of the family estate in the father's lifetime. See *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxv, p. 345.

first looks earthward, and the second heavenward; the first is a training for life, and the second a training for death. The first is consequently adapted for the average healthy man, while the second is fit only for the diseased and dying. As science spreads, and the population of our planet presses more and more upon the food supply, it is probable that the ascetic life will regain its former popularity, and the monastery will be supplemented by the lethal chamber. Indeed English legislation has already made great strides in the direction of assimilating the prison to the medieval monastery. The congenital criminal will in future be isolated for life, or put to death, in the interest of Humanity; but it is to be hoped that he will be spared the stupid insults of the Puritan judge and gaoler.

We find the Puritans and Ascetics face to face, under the names of Pharisees and Essenes, in the Jewry of the first century. To some extent Jesus the Nazarene appears to favour the Ascetics. But it will be found that he does so only up to a certain point. His enmity to the Puritans rests on other and more personal grounds.

Just as the religious and moral codes of the prehistoric period had taken the form of covenants of mutual service and protection, struck between the totem-clan and its totem; between the horse-eaters and the Divine Horse, the dwellers in the Crocodile Nome and the sacred Crocodile, the Athenians and Athene, and the worshippers of a thousand Jupiters and their Divine Father in Heaven; so was the Zarathustrian covenant struck between the Fire-worshippers and the Fiery God. But in the view of the Puritan his God was the only true God, and all other Gods were Devils. Ormuzd was at war with Ahriman, their warfare rent the creation, and on earth the

Puritans were the militia of the Mighty God. They were commissioned to extirpate his enemies, and to enforce his laws. For the first time in the history of this planet there arose a race inspired with the terrible belief that it had been ordered by its God to make all mankind in his image, to impose his laws on every variety of the human species, and thus to make his kingdom come on earth.

All morality is essentially unjust, because its essence is the imposition of the same law on differing natures. The Puritan morality is that of the White man, and therefore it is an outrage on the Black. It is the code of the North, and therefore it is a monstrosity in the South. It embodies the thoughts and feelings of the normal man, and therefore it is a strait-waistcoat for the abnormal man, be he underman or overman, ape or angel.

The prophet is the true Overman ; his morality is that of the next age ; he is the king of to-morrow, and therefore the rebel of to-day. To say so is not to suggest that Jesus the Nazarene had thought out the question in this way. His antipathy to the Pharisees seems rather to have been instinctive, that is to say, prophetic, that is to say, inspired. He suffered in this furnace of righteousness—this parching drought of love. He suffered as the subject of a kinder law, and as the Son of a more humane God. He suffered, it is still true to say, on behalf of mankind, tasting in advance the pangs of all the victims of the Church.

If we may not say that Christ died to save the human race from Christianity, we may say at least that he died to save it from the Christians. He it is, and no other, who lives in history as the champion of the sinner. In every age Jesus the

Nazarene has been the true "Apostle of the Heretics." The Gospel has been the antidote to the Athanasian Creed. The story of the man who went about doing good, and forgiving sins, and resisting the righteous to the death, has been like a perennial spring of spiritual refreshment running amid the arid deserts of the Universal Faith.

Let us be just to Ormuzd and to Ahriman. When the vast heat wave ebbed away it left a new world which was in many ways a reproduction of the old. Genius had failed to lift mankind permanently into its own rarer atmosphere. The Chinese went on worshipping their ancestors, with K'ung the Master as chief among them. The cult of Tao sank into a system of magical religion. The Brahmans regained India; and elsewhere the Buddhists worshipped Buddha instead of imitating him. The light of Greek philosophy burned dimly in the dark lantern of Catholic theology. But the prophet of the Caspian had wrought more effectually than they all. His success was greater because his aims were lower and more practical. Like his great successor, Muhammad, he forged a weapon that the common man could wield. He wrought as the Maker of God and the Maker of Man. He wrought with zeal against superstition, and with holiness against caste, overcoming gods and kings by the strength of the One God and King.

> Nor ought we to omit the recognition that the Puritan Morality, passing through the Stoic philosophers to the Roman lawyers, and elaborated under the name of the Law of Nature, is the foundation of European, and particularly of International, Law.

The good and evil wrought by the Puritan Faith must be weighed against each other. The

means were necessary to the end. Not without great strife and tribulation, not without the baptism of fire, could the European race have been delivered from a thousand horrors which it had ceased even to remember when it met with them once more in the bloody temples of the Aztecs, and in the shades of African groves. Great is the debt of humanity to whomsoever can free it from the accumulated burden of its past.

> This has been the fatal curse of man, to cherish
> Customs that his better life no more demands ;
> In the dust of generations dead we perish ;
> We are strangled in our race's swaddling bands.

CHAPTER X

THE HOLY LAND

1. The Bible. 2. Chronology of Palestine: The Canaanites. 3. The Hebrews. 4. Israel. 5. *Yahweh.*

To the infant mind of our race the earth on which it trod was holy and mysterious, in the most awful and literal sense. The caves and woods, the streams and deserts, are not solitary for the savage, but peopled as thickly as the London streets, and peopled for the most part with secret enemies. The warfare of creation is carried on between invisible sorcerers, on some of whom he has natural claims for sympathy and protection, while the wrath of others can only be appeased by bloody sacrifices. The ancestral spirits of his family and clan are his Ahura-Mazda; the spirits of cold and fever, of the lion and the bear, of the hostile Amorites and Amalekites, are the Satans and Apollyons of the Holy War. The line between flesh and spirit is indistinctly drawn. On the one hand the ancestral wizard lives on at the same time in his tumulus, and in the body of his descendant. On the other the real Amalekites are confounded with the imaginary ones. In the great Persian epic the unknown mountain tribes with whom Rustam goes to war are throughout described as devils. The small dark Earth-dwellers of the first age of Europe figure in our own folk tales under the name of gnomes and dwarfs and ogres as a fairy race.[1] So, too, even the heavenly Elohim are entangled in the strifes of earth. The Gods of Ida descend to take part in

[1] The Kaboutermannekins described by Thorpe (above, p. 205, footnote) are so regarded by himself. The name meets us in Longfellow's ballad of the Carmilhan as that of a spirit—the Klaboterman.

the battle round Troy. The Signs in their courses fight against Sisera, and the Sun hearkens to the voice of a man.

The geography of the spiritual world gradually shrank and altered as the growth of knowledge separated the firm land from the deep. The Gods who had once moved so familiarly among men withdrew to a country of their own. They hid themselves in dark groves, on cloud-capped hills, or in the temple's innermost cell. Last of all, fixing their abode in the sky, they ceased to visit their worshippers even in dreams, and drew up the ladder by which their messengers were wont to pass to and fro between heaven and earth. It is natural that we should remember only their kindly aspects, and forget the evil; the hands that brandished fiery darts, and the jaws dropping blood. The eye that gazes towards a sunset across the distant waves can see only the crests picked out with light, but not the shadowy depths between.

So it is with a wistful tenderness, born of regret, like what we feel for a departed friend, that we turn to the last spot on earth on which the Elohim lingered in corporeal presence; and turn the pages of that wondrous story of Israel that was read for ages as the most veracious of all chronicles, and as the verbal composition of the Third Person of the Christian Trinity. Even now, in exchanging the character of an inspired and magical history for that of a divine parable, the narrative has not ceased to be magical, and has not ceased to be inspired. The Bible cannot easily lose its rank at the head of planetary literature, as the most precious salvage of time.

There is some danger, indeed, that a dilettante sentiment, masquerading as religious reverence, may cause us to forget the real service wrought

by those who from the time of Epicurus and Lucretius have set themselves to emancipate the human race from the fiends of its own imagination. We are almost arrived at the mood of Poe, when he reproached Science with having—

> Dragged Diana from her car,
> And driven the Hamadryad from the wood.

The Epicurean poet, writing in the last Pagan century in a world for which Diana and the hamadryads were still real and terrible, set himself to banish them from the realm of man's belief, in order to relieve his fellows from their burden of intolerable fear. And so, in the twentieth century, a Maori queen testified to the reporter of a London newspaper that whatever wrongs her nation had suffered at English hands had been atoned for by the preaching that had relieved them from the horrors of their spiritual faith. When we consider that this preaching included the doctrine of an eternal hell, we may faintly imagine what religion was before the rise of the Universal Faith.

To-day that faith in its turn is giving place to a milder and more hopeful one. It will be most difficult for the next generation to realise what the terror of the Christian hell meant to the last. It is true piety, and true reverence, to accept the new revelation of Science in a grateful, and not in a grudging spirit, and to recognise in what Carlyle called the "Exodus from Houndsditch" a deliverance as great as any wrought for the Israelites of old. The immemorial charm of this great legend is still with us; its historical value as a museum of ancient faiths is far greater than it ever possessed as a chronicle; and even its religious value is increased when it teaches us to measure the progress made by mankind in the knowledge of the true God. If a people like the

historical Israelites were found in any corner of the British empire to-day practising a religion like that of Jehovah, they would be sternly dealt with by the British government; and the foremost in demanding the suppression of their cult would be the missionaries who address their own God by that name.

In the meanwhile we shall do well to distinguish between the Old Testament regarded as the manifesto of the Jewish Church, and that portion of its contents which has a more general character as the expression of religious emotion common to other races and to other times. The writings of the Hebrew poets have a value altogether independent of their historical and theological framework, like gems that can be removed from one setting to another without losing their lustre. It is neither the originality nor the philosophical truth of their religion, but the intense conviction with which they held it, that has given to the Jews their unique place in history. The same criticism holds good of their sacred literature. Its distinctive note is earnestness, an earnestness beside which the poetry of other religions sounds almost hollow. The Hebrew worshipper enjoys a tremendous intimacy with his God. It is this which gives to his outpourings that peculiar quality to which we rightly give the name of inspiration. Such poetry is wizard poetry. It is not the cold production of the scholar at his desk. It is something panted out in the very excess of emotion, like the *hwyl* of the Welsh preacher. The prophet and the psalmist abandon themselves; they are sufferers, not creators; the unseen spirit blows through them like the wind through organ pipes. Their writings are often turgid, sometimes trivial, and always broken and incomplete; but in comparison no other literature seems alive.

As an historical document the Old Testament can only be understood in the light of the circumstances in which it acquired its present character and outline. The compilation of the Hebrew canon took place progressively in the bosom of the Jewish Church, as it was organised in Babylon and Jerusalem, under Persian auspices, during the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ.[1] Whatever older materials have entered into the composition of the various books, authentic archives or popular traditions, primitive folk-tales or prophetic oracles, all have been so far expurgated and rewritten under Puritan influence that we cannot now be sure of a single sentence having reached us in its original state. The Puritan revision was still going on, with more and more severity, when the process received a check from the translation of the Hebrew into Greek, beginning in the third century B.C. with the Torah or Pentateuch. No longer able to tamper freely with a text which had thus passed out of their exclusive custody, the rabbinical schools were obliged to confine their activity for the future to such commentaries as are collected in the Talmud. The text thus stereotyped unawares, in the midst of its evolution, resembles those mounds that preserve, layer beneath layer, the remains of a whole series of buried cities and civilisations. As the surface legend disappears before the pick of science we can read underneath a history not less instructive, because it is in substance the same story more truly told.

On the surface the Israelite legend is an attempt to find in the national history an illustration of

[1] I can only give here the general results reached by generations of students, and acquiesced in by most professional theologians to-day. The *Encyclopædia Biblica* may be referred to as representative of the most enlightened school within the Christian pale.

the Zarathustrian theology. We are reminded of those tragedies in which the Greek poets have endeavoured to show the power of their Gods at work in the sufferings of Œdipus and the Atrides.

> The more I study the Iliad the more I am disposed to see in it a local and historical adaptation of an ancient Mystery, perhaps originally that of the Smiths. A Lay of the Shield seems to me to be the core of the entire epic ; the Siege depicted on the Shield of Achilles is the true Siege of Troy.

The Hebrew writers have wrought with wider art on a more colossal scale. The Mystery is played out on the real stage of the world since its creation, with Israel for the hero, and the Universal God as the deity of the machine. The one true God, forsaken by the rest of mankind, has doomed them to destruction, and concentrated his favour on the descendants of Abraham. The Israelites are expected to repay their divine protector by detestation of his rivals, corresponding with the Ahrimanian Devas, and by the ruthless extermination of their worshippers.

There is a spiritual truth underlying this view of history, but the sufferings of the Jews from that hour to the present are a sad commentary on its claim to literal belief; and the personal traits bequeathed by the prehistoric God of Israel to the Yahweh of the scribes, and transferred by the Christians to the First Person of their Trinity, are many of them so abhorrent to a civilised conscience that the most reverent minds of our generation are as anxious to demonstrate the fabulous character of much of the legend as those of the last were to maintain its historical truth.

The scene of the Hebrew drama is laid in the borderland between the two great civilisations of the ancient world. Three generations of explorers,

many of them devout believers subsidised by rich corporations in the hope of verifying the foundations of their faith, have been engaged in searching from the Tigris to the Nile for some scrap of evidence, however slight, in confirmation of the Mosaic myth. Their labours have been ill-rewarded by the discovery of an occasional name resembling " Hebrew " or " Israel " in Egyptian lists of tributary or conquered tribes ; by similar Assyrian notices beginning with King Ahab in the ninth century B.C., and by an interesting Moabite inscription of the same date recording the triumph of Chemosh over Jehovah. The Israelites of the legend, with their pedigree from Abraham and Adam, their divine vocation as monotheists, their miraculous wanderings and wars, their law delivered in thunder on Mount Sinai, and inscribed on stone by the material finger-tip of the Creator —it is certain that these inhabitants of fairyland have left no trace of their sojourn on any earthly site.

In the meanwhile the originals of whole chapters of Genesis, and whole sections of the Mosaic law, have been deciphered amid the dust of Babylon. A vivid light has been thrown on the Canaan of the fifteenth century B.C. by the discovery of correspondence between the petty kings of the country and their Egyptian overlord ;[1] and it reveals the whole region, at the very time assigned by the legend for the exploits of the mythical Joshua, already inhabited by a population which wrote the Hebrew language in the Babylonian script. Two hundred years later, in the course of a punitive expedition, the Pharaoh Merenptah records his destruction of the crops of the Israelites, among other Canaanite rebels, while at the same date a number of " Apuri "—if that should

[1] Known to scholars as the Tel-el-Amarna tablets.

mean Hebrew—are found peacefully dwelling in towns on the Egyptian frontier, the land of Goshen.

Apart from such occasional and scanty notices we are dependent for the history of the Jews on their own writings. Even in the historical period the strange little commonwealth between the Mediterranean and the desert failed to attract the curiosity of the Greek historians. The Jew Josephus had no other sources of information for the earlier period than are before us in the Old Testament, and he shows no critical sagacity in their use. The truth has to be extracted from the legend; and where so much depends on the judgment exercised, and so little can be definitely ascertained, the voice of reason must take the place of authority.

> Although this literature has been the subject of more study and interpretation than any other, except perhaps the Confucian Canon, it is only within very recent years that the progress of anthropological research, and comparison with the religious and social evolution of other barbarous peoples, has made it possible to approach these documents in a scientific spirit. We are still very far, however, from a full or final understanding of their contents. It must not be supposed that the analysis of ancient documents in an obsolete language and deeply corrupted text is a process at all comparable with that of the exact sciences, and the critic who invites us to base any important conclusions on textual criticism, uncorroborated by other evidence, forfeits all title to confidence even in his own sphere.

Under these conditions, and without pretending to settle questions that do not admit of settlement with our present information, we may

try to follow the course of Jewish history to the point at which Jerusalem became a focus of the Universal Faith, and a chief centre of its dissemination in the West. We shall see the clans that have been confounded under the general name of Israel in their true character as learners, not teachers, of religion in the ancient world; and we shall give the stubborn patriots of Jerusalem credit for their true contribution to Christianity, not as scientific thinkers, but as artists in religious emotion. They were not philosophers, but poets, who took the cold image of the Puritan theology to their bosom, and warmed it into life. They gave to the abstraction of Zarathustra a local habitation in the hills of Canaan, and a name endeared by the memories of their heroic past.

Our best authorities for the history of Israel are the living Israelites of lands still in the Canaanite stage. For this reason I thought it an indispensable part of my preparation for the present work to study those living documents at first hand. A brief tenure of a Government post in the Niger Valley (1901-2), corresponding very closely with the one held by Pontius Pilate in Judea, furnished me with endless illustrations of the Pagan features in the Bible. The horns of the altar met my eye in the shape of real antelope horns sticking out from a juju heap of stones; a wizard called down thunder from the sky; the gates of the city were guarded by gods of clay; the high place was forbidden to all but the priest-king Melchisedek and his train. I overthrew as many kings as Joshua, and have little doubt that I was credited with equal authority over the moon and sun. In one stronghold of thugs and robbers a man was put to death, like the King of Moab's son, to avert my entrance; elsewhere I trod a green hill outside a city wall, whereon a man had been sacrificed at Easter from time immemorial.

2. *Chronology of Palestine* [1]

HEBREW Period. 2,000-3,000 years.

B.C.

4000 Semitic realm on Euphrates. Expeditions to Phœnicia.
3000 Empire of Ur. (Hebrews penetrate Canaan ?)
2400 Semitic realm of Assyria. Hammurabi in Babylon.
2000 (?) Hyksos (Hittites ?) conquer Egypt.

EGYPTIAN Bondage, 300-400 years.

1600 Hyksos expelled. Egyptian conquest of Canaan.
1400 Solar Faith brought into Egypt from Euphrates.
1200 Israelites in Canaan punished by Pharaoh.

ISRAELITE Period, 500 years.

1100 Philistines settle on coast, and oppress Israelites.
1000 David sets up Hebrew-Israelite kingdom.
930 (?) Israelites form kingdom of Samaria.
850 Ahab, King of Israel. Moab revolts.
740 Assyria levies tribute from Israel and Judah.
720 Fall of Samaria.

JEWISH Period, 700 years.

700 Hezekiah threatened by Sennachrib.
600 Babylonian empire revived.
586 Fall of Jerusalem.
538 Persian conquest of Babylon.
515 (?) Temple of Jerusalem rebuilt.
445 (?) Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt, Legislation of Ezra.

[1] Based on tables in the *Encycl. Biblica*, checked by comparison with the chronology of Flinders Petrie's *History of Egypt*.

330 End of Persian empire. Palestine under Ptolemies.

280 Greek translation of Torah (Septuagint).

200 Palestine under Seleucids.

166 Revolt of the Maccabees. Kingdom of Judea.

63 Roman conquest of Judea.

It will be seen by a glance at the foregoing table, the dates in which are mostly given in round numbers merely, for purposes of comparison, that the story of Israel is an episode in the longer Hebrew history, and but a moment in the secular life of Canaan.

Of the prehistoric inhabitants of the land, the Hivites and Jebusites, the Amorites and Perizzites, whose dim figures pass across the earlier scene, we know little that is definite. The mythical genealogies in the Bible seem to connect them at the same time with Egypt, and with the pre-Semitic peoples of Babylonia. Lying between the two great civilisations of the Western sphere, Palestine has doubtless been influenced by both, throughout its unrecorded as well as its recorded past. From the earliest beginnings of the Egyptian power it is certain that the peoples dwelling on her Asiatic frontier felt the pressure of their mighty neighbour. No one of any imagination can doubt that the shadow of the Pyramids fell far across the surrounding lands. The power whose slaves worked the mines of Sinai knew something of the land flowing with milk and honey that lay almost on its route thither. Among the hundred thousand labourers who perished in raising the tombs of Khufu and Khephren were many Canaanite Josephs, sold by their brethren to the caravans of Egypt.

We shall see clearly that the ancient Canaanites never perished from the land. They lived on, not only as hewers of wood and drawers of water, but as allies and kinsmen, first of the Hebrews, and afterwards of the Israelites. They continued above all as the hereditary priesthoods in charge of the local and national shrines. We are entitled, we are bound in candour, to look for the handiwork of the masons who built the Pyramids at the foundations of the Jewish and the Christian cults.

We shall not look in vain. Underneath all the likenesses of mythology and ritual that have been pointed out by students, there is a far more abiding affinity of spirit. When the test of emotion is applied to it, Christianity stands revealed as an Egyptian faith. Those cries of the soul that were heard in the liturgies of Osiris have passed into the Psalms of Zion, and into the Christian liturgy. The pilgrimage and warfare of the soul is the theme that underlies all the astrological and all the historical allegory. The inspired prisoner who wove the *Pilgrim's Progress* (as he tells us) out of the substance of his dreams, has reproduced with marvellous fidelity the very incidents of the initiation ceremonies of ancient Egypt, almost in the language of the Book of the Dead.

History is a great ritualist. Her eye is ever fixed on outward forms and ceremonies, on state processions and sounding proclamations. Her view of Christianity is taken from the outside; she sees it in its social aspect as an organised system of belief and worship, she reads its annals and debates, and pronounces it to be Semitic or Aryan. On what may be called its scientific and practical side—the side we have hitherto considered—such a verdict is warranted. But there is an inner Christianity, a religion of the individual heart, in which the Gnostic touches hands

with the Catholic mystic, and with the Evangelical Protestant. In this religion the redemption of the sinner is not so much the historical transaction consummated on the material cross of Calvary as it is the work of the Christ within. And this religion is truly African, it is drawn from the deepest wells of the African conscience, and makes its appeal to atavistic instincts of which the modern European has learned to be ashamed. The Church of Rome views this religion with unsleeping jealousy, because it is outside the scope of her authority. The Church of England tolerates it with aristocratic dislike. The modern religion of Humanity ignores it altogether. It is the religion of Wesley, not Rousseau. Perhaps it is the religion of decadence. It may be a disease. The historians of religion, unconsciously writing the history of science, pass it over in silence. And yet nothing can be more certain than that without this feature the history of Christianity cannot be understood.

The sinner longing for an ever-present Saviour to help him against the Enemy within is a figure not to be found in any of the great book religions. We cannot think of him as praying to any of the Olympian Gods. The lofty philosophy of Buddha makes no provision for his need. The stern Puritan faith offers him more concrete enemies, and a discipline of fear, not love. Who is he then ; whence did he come ; how live and worship in the ancient world ? He is the unnamed element in that society, the man without a language or a literature of his own, without a nation or a religion deemed worthy of the attention of history. He is the conquered. He is the slave. In reading the Hebrew books we hear much of the chosen people, their glories and vicissitudes, their sufferings and triumphs. Those Perizzites and Hivites, those

Jebusites and Gibeonites, they were a chosen people too. They did not fall to the ground unmarked by their Heavenly Father. They were men and women who suffered and were comforted. And so when the Hebrews fell in their turn, when they were dragged off to captivity, they learned from their fellow captives those songs, sadder than the songs of Zion, new songs to them but old to other men and races; that had once soothed the bricklayers on the Pyramid, and the navvies who drained the plain of Shinar in long forgotten days. So from the crowded slums of Rome, from the galleys and the salt-mines, there welled up that immortal strain of human longing and divine love that turned the hearts of the oppressors; and the world-ruler, walking past the darkened slave-prison, as King Knut rowed by Ely, paused to listen to notes that struck an answering chord in his own breast, and found himself a Christian before he knew.

The Christian Church never quite forgot its origin. The great Pope of the Dark Age [1] who wrought so earnestly to lay waste the science and literature of Hellenism, wrought also for the emancipation of the slave. But the true Christian does not want to be free. Those in whose heart that music had sounded devised a new slavery for themselves, and the convent became a voluntary ergastulum, wherein men suffered self-inflicted stripes.

3. *The Hebrews*

If we now return to the surface of the stream, we shall see a Semitic current steadily overflowing Canaan for some thousands of years. As early as 4000 B.C. the nomads of the north Arabian desert

[1] Gregory I.

had conquered a great part of the old Sumer-Akkadian realm, learning its science and practising its arts.[1] From the lower Euphrates they spread northward and westward along the course of the two great rivers. The maritime cities of upper Canaan, or Phœnicia, were founded or occupied by Semitic colonies from the coast of the Persian Gulf,[2] and rose to importance as the junction of the caravan routes from Babylon on the east and Egypt on the south, and the markets where the wealth of Asia and Africa was exchanged for that of Europe.

We have every reason to believe that other

[1] According to recent students, from the very earliest times, probably prior to 4000 B.C., there had been a gradual infiltration of Semites from Northern Arabia into North Babylonia. They rapidly assimilated themselves to the old Sumerian culture and borrowed the cuneiform mode of writing. Shortly after 4000 B.C. we find a Semitic ruler on the throne of the important Sumerian city kingdom of Kish, a monarch named Manishtusu, who exercised great power. He ruled over all South Babylonia and carried his power as far as the land of Amurru or Syria, the Amorite country. Towards the end of the reign of Manishtusu, the power of the Semites very much increased, and the incomers were able to establish a new kingdom of their own with Agade or Akkad as capital. The new kingdom prospered greatly, this being due to two energetic rulers, Sargon I or Shar-gani-sarri and his son Naram Sin, by whose energetic warfare the new kingdom dominated all Western Asia from Elam (Western Persia) to the shores of the Mediterranean. The foundation of the kingdom of Akkad, about 3800 B.C., was a most important event, as it established a dualism of rule in South Babylonia which lasted until the fall of the Babylonian Empire in 538 B.C.; of the two kingdoms of Sumer and Akkad, the former of non-Semitic origin, the latter Semitic, the influence of the Semites in Babylonia was very great. They rapidly acquired the most important part of the civilisation and religion of the Sumerians, and infused into it a vitality long wanting. Their restless energy led to an aggressive policy which spread the power of the Semites and their great trading activity over all western Asia. (See L. W. King's *Sumur-Akkad*, ch. viii; also p. 343 *et seq.*)

[2] According to Herodotus the Phœnicians came from settlements on the Persian Gulf to the shores of the Mediterranean. Renan (*Histoire des Langues Semitiques*, ii, p. 183) says: "The greater number of the critics admit it as demonstrated that the primitive abode of the Phœnician must be placed in the Lower Euphrates, in the centre of the great commercial and maritime establishments of the Persian Gulf."—See Rawlinson's *History of Phœnicia*, pp. 21-22.

Semitic clans, following the same route from the Euphrates, turned southward into the valley of the Jordan, carrying with them their language, manners, and religion, and impressed on the whole region that Semitic character which it has preserved ever since.[1]

The most celebrated name among the Semitic colonists of Canaan is that of the HEBREWS (*Ibrim* or *Hebrayyim*), who are perhaps to be recognised again as the *Habiri* and *Apuri* of the Egyptian archives.

> The name is variously explained by Hebraical scholars as meaning "immigrants" or "sons of Eber." I cannot overlook, however, the likeness between Ibrim and Abram, corresponding as it does with that between Abraham and its Arabic form, Ibrahim. We are here on the track of one of those rhymes which have so much influenced the primitive mind, and so much entangled ancient etymologies.

Whatever be the true form and origin of their own name, it is not questioned that the name of the mythical ancestor of the Hebrews, *Abram*, means literally, "Father of Height," and in Babylonian usage, "Father of the High Ones" in a sacred sense.[2] In short it is the appropriate title of Saturn, the remotest of the seven Babylonian planets, and the one believed in consequence to

[1] It may be argued from the pedigree of the Semites in Genesis (x. 21) that the Hebrews actually came from Armenia, and hence that they belong by descent to the Aryan element that has from time to time penetrated southward of the Euphrates. See Pleyte, *Religion des Pré-Israelites*, i. 7. But it is dangerous to extract history from such fanciful documents, and we need not go behind the Semitic conquest.

[2] The name Abram is a form of the Semitic Babylonian *Abu-ramu*, "High Father." It is one title of the Babylonian Moon-god of Ur. It is found in several of the Hymns. Indeed, all the family of Abram have lunar names. Abram—the High Father; Sarah and Milkah, the Babylonian Sarratu and Milkatu, the Queen and Princess titles of the Female Moon, Istur. Terah is the Babylonian Terakhu (Gazelle), the Totem of the Moon-god. On this subject see Boscawen's *First of Empires*, ch. iv.

influence the last day of the week. The testimony of the prophet Amos is not required to tell us that this planet (also named Chiun and Remphan) was a peculiar object of Hebrew adoration. An extravagant veneration for Saturday remains to this hour the mark which most distinguishes the Jews from every other race of mankind. The best of the prophets stigmatised the Sabbath superstition, along with that of the new moon, as a relic of heathenism.[1] But the habit was too firmly rooted in the national life to be given up, and the priestly compilers of the Decalogue have tried to sanctify it on various grounds, some of them blasphemous to an instructed mind.[2]

> According to the reported statement of Sanchoniathon, the Phœnician name of the planet was *Israel*, and Amos appears to taunt the Israelites with having carried the tabernacle of Saturn (instead of Yahweh) in the wilderness (Amos v. 25-6). It is possible that we have here another coincidence of words and things, but that hardly affects the evidence for the establishment of the cult of Saturn in Canaan during the long Hebrew period, along with the other tokens of Babylonian influence.

The town of Hebron, if it did not take its name from the Hebrews, appears as their religious metropolis, the site of the altar of Abram, and in the belief of later times, of the sepulchre of *Abraham*. As such it appears in the first age as the most venerated focus of the Semitic nationality in Canaan. An idiom substantially the same as the Hebrew of the Old Testament remained the official language of the whole country through the period of Egyptian dominion. The king of

[1] Isaiah i. 13, cited above.

[2] The version given in Exodus xx. 11 assigns the reason that the Lord rested on this day from the labour of creation. In Deuteronomy v. 15 it is suggested that this was the day of deliverance from Egypt.

Urushalim (Jerusalem), writing to Pharaoh to complain of the attacks of the Habiri (Hebrews ?) writes in the Hebrew language and the Babylonian alphabet. There can be no more decisive evidence of the extent to which Canaan had been brought under the moral and intellectual dominion of the Euphratean realm.

The passage of the Hittites, and afterwards of the Egyptians, across the stage of Canaan interrupted these relations for many centuries. The Semitic civilisation was rudely shattered by the passage of great armies, and the work of devastation was completed by the irruption of the savage tribes whom it is convenient to distinguish from the previous *Hebrew* settlers as ISRAELITES. Just as a similar, though shorter, interruption of intercourse between Britain and Rome caused the Christianity of our island to become out of date and heretical in the eyes of the Popes, so we may suppose that the Hebrews fell behind the religious progress of the Semitic world in the Euphrates and sank insensibly to a level nearer that of their invaders. The legendary change of the name Abram to Abraham, " Father of Height " or " the High Ones " to " Father of Nations,"[1] points to a relapse from astrological religion to a more primitive ancestor worship. The Baal of Hebron sank from a celestial Genius to be an Arab sheikh. The national legend itself testifies very strongly to some feeling in the Jewish mind that they had lost touch with a higher faith known to their ancestors. They preserved some tradition of Babylonia as their fatherland, and inserted its myths in the beginning of their sacred history.

We are no longer dependent on the Jews for a scale by which to measure the religious decadence of their ancestors. In the middle of the Egyptian

[1] Genesis xvii. 5.

period a princess coming from the Euphrates to become the wife of one Pharaoh, and the mother of another, brought with her the Solar Faith in its purity ;[1] and a hymn has survived to tell us how much higher a revelation had been made to her than to the savages who, hundreds of years later, were still worshipping with human sacrifices and obscene rites a fetish carried in a box.

"Thy appearing is beautiful in the horizon of heaven, the Living Lord, the beginning of life. . . .

"Men awake and stand upon their feet, for thou liftest them up ; they bathe their limbs, they clothe themselves, they lift their hands in adoration of thy rising. . . .

"The small bird in the egg, sounding within the shell, thou givest to it breath within the egg, to give life to that which thou makest. It gathers itself to break forth from the egg, it cometh from the egg, and chirps with all its might ; it runneth on its feet when it has come forth. . . .

"Thou makest the seasons of the year, to create all thy works, the winter making them cool, the summer giving warmth. Thou makest the far-off heaven that thou mayest rise in it, that thou mayest see all that thou madest when thou wast alone.

"Thou art in my heart, there is none who knoweth thee, save thy son. . . . Thou causest that he should have understanding in thy ways and in thy might. . . .

"Since the day that thou laidest the foundations of the earth." (*Aten Hymn*, trans. Griffith.)

There are few expressions in this hymn that might not be matched in the later Hebrew, and the beautiful picture of the chicken coming out of

[1] See the passage referring to the Aten Disk above, p. 196.

its shell breathes the very spirit of the Book of Job. But five hundred years after it was written the contemporary religion of Israel is reflected with no less striking fidelity in the inscription of Mesha.

" I am Mesha, son of Chemosh, King of Moab, the Daibonite. . . . I made this high place for Chemosh in K-r(-h)-h, a (high place of sal)vation, because he had saved me from the assailants (?), and because he had let me see my desire upon them that hated me.

" Omri, king of Israel, afflicted Moab for many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land. . . .

" And Chemosh said unto me, Go, take Nebo against Israel. And I went by night, and fought against it from the break of dawn till noon. And I took it, and slew the whole of it, 7,000 men and male strangers, and women and (female stranger)s and female slaves ; for I had devoted it to Ashtor-Chemosh. And I took thence the (ves)sels of Yahweh, and I dragged them before Chemosh." (*Moabite Stone*, trans. *Enc. Bib.*)

That is the spirit of the Books of Joshua and Judges, and of the Ephraimite prophet who hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. We are prepared to find some justification for the claim of Judah to be the spiritual superior of Israel. The historical rift between Samaria and Jerusalem had its origin in the gulf of more than a thousand years between the two Semitic settlements in Canaan.

4. *Israel*

The chronological outline reveals that the true Egyptian bondage of four hundred years was that of the whole population of Canaan, and the true

Exodus was that of Pharaoh and his agents after the year 1200 B.C. Therefore we need not follow the textual critics in their argument that Musri or Mizraim was the name of the region to the south of Judea, better known as Edom, and that the Mosaic migration started from there. Geographical names had a very indefinite extension in former times; the term Musri (south ?) may well have covered the whole of Arabia and Africa; and a migration from any part of the area over which the authority of Pharaoh stretched would have the character of an escape from Egypt.

The difficulty is to find a suitable date for the Exodus of the legend, or any solid evidence that it was known, even as a legend, to the historical Israelites, confining that name to the highland clans of Mount Ephraim, who formed the nucleus of the Samaritan kingdom.

This much is plainly shown by the archives preserved at Tel-el-Amarna, that the slackening of the Egyptian hold on Canaan produced a state of anarchy which tempted the incursion of the savage clans of the desert, always prowling on the borders of civilisation, and gazing with longing eyes towards the lands flowing with milk and honey whose riches were magnified by the mirage of the wilderness. Further, the Pharaoh Merenptah has left it on record that, in the course of a punitive expedition through Canaan, which seems to have been the last effort of Egypt to assert her authority, he destroyed the crops of the "people of Israel."[1] Unless we are to take this as a name coeval with the first Hebrew immigration (which is not improbable), it would follow that some of the

[1] In 1223 B.C. Merenptah, in punishing the rebel states of southern Palestine, mentions Israel and says: "Their seed is destroyed." His words are: "Israel is desolated, her seed is not." This shows that the Israelites had secured a footing in southern Palestine and were sufficiently amalgamated to be accounted a people.—Breasted's *History of Egypt*, pp. 466, 470, 471.

Bedawin hordes had effected a lodgment in the country, and settled down to an agricultural life, during the Egyptian protectorate.

In any case it is easy to see from the patchwork of myth and saga embedded in the historical books of the Old Testament that the second Semitic settlement was a very gradual process, bearing a considerable likeness to the Saxon conquest of Britain. The desert tribes are seen making their way into Canaan from the south as well as from the east, and settling on both sides of the Jordan. We are told that the Canaanites of the plain country were able to hold their own through the possession of war-chariots, perhaps a reminiscence of some Egyptian relief. Walled cities were only to be taken by surprise, if at all, the fall of Jericho being remembered as a miracle. The most important expedition was that of the group variously referred to as Ephraim, Joseph or Israel, which crossed the Jordan and laid the foundations of the future Samaritan kingdom.

The books of Judges and Samuel afford a life-like and not untruthful picture of the state to which Canaan was reduced by these calamitous inroads. All civilisation and settled government have disappeared. The savages who have burst in from the desert are seen prowling through the land like gangs of armed gypsies, on the look out for some village that they can raid and occupy, after massacring the males and reducing the females to slavery.[1] Their strength lies only in destruction; as soon as they settle down anywhere they fall in their turn under the oppression of some stronger neighbour. As for the Tells and Wallaces who arise from time to time to break the yoke of servitude, it is not always easy to say

[1] The most trustworthy narrative, perhaps, is that of the taking of Laish, in Judges xviii.

whether they come from the newer or the older layers of the Canaanite population. The Israelites, if we may follow long-established usage in referring to the whole of the immigrating hordes by one name, are gradually interspersed among the former inhabitants much like the Fulahs among the Hausas in the Western Sudan, and the Kurds among the Armenians in the Turkish empire. Outside the limits of Mount Ephraim they exhibit few traces of a collective national feeling, and even the Ephraimites have nothing that can be called a well-defined tribal cult, without which there could be no firm political union in such an age.

It is the planters of Mount Ephraim, to whom the name of Israelite more particularly attaches, who seem to figure in the forefront of the Exodus legend, and whose adventures may have given rise to it. We know that warlike expeditions are not as a rule undertaken by savages until they have first consulted an oracle, and obtained an assurance of success from some soothsayer or priest. An expedition that aimed at the conquest of new territories, and a general migration of a whole stock, with its wives and children, its cattle and its Gods, was important enough to call for unusual solemnities, and to be the subject of a league between independent clans. Such a kernel of truth we may well look for in the famous story of the Exodus.

We might go on—it would be dangerously easy—to extract from the legend a plausible and quite probable narrative. The clans or clansmen assemble at the foot of some high place or juju hill—scarcely the Sinai of our geography—the shrine of a venerated God, and one associated with good luck in war. The customary victims, rams or bulls, are anointed, slain and eaten, at once

as a communion and a sacrifice. The presiding wizard ascends the hill alone, or accompanied only by the chief men of the tribe. He enters the sacred grove or grot, remains a short time in private conversation with the Genius, and comes out with a satisfactory response. The God has been graciously pleased to accept the sacrifice, the bargain is struck, and he has promised his protection in return for the obedience of his worshippers. Perhaps the sorcerer comes out bearing in his hand a fetish stone, and announces to the expectant multitude that the God has announced his intention to accompany their march, and contribute his personal exertions to the victory—*In hoc signo vinces !*

> Another conjecture is that the true name of the Covenant God was Joseph, whose bones were carried, of course as a talisman, on the march, and who takes his place in the mythical genealogy as the father of Ephraim and Manasseh.

Not less probable are some of the subsequent incidents of the legend ; the occasional failure of the Covenant God to redeem his promises ; the mutual recriminations of the juju man and the disappointed clansmen ; the resort to other divinities in the form of bulls and serpents, and the ultimate neglect of the Covenant God when his worshippers are scattered in their new homes.

Very similar episodes to this have marked the recent history of races like the Zulus and Matabele, and if they entered into the history of Israel they can only have had this character. It must be pointed out, however, that there is hardly an incident in the Mosaic legend, from the birth of Moses himself, that cannot be paralleled in mythology. The Mosaic legislation is admittedly a compilation of customary law and temple

ordinances, put together by Jewish scribes, such as Ezra. The sequel purporting to relate the career of Joshua is altogether unconvincing, and is best explained by the supposition that Joshua (" Helper " or " Saviour ") originally meant the Covenant God.

The question is deprived of historical importance by the fact that no such legend, true or false, exercised any strong influence on the history of Israel during its existence as a nation. When we come upon the Ephraimites in their new homes, in the Book of Judges, they show no remembrance of an escape from Egypt, a covenant of Sinai, a legislative code, or any of the conspicuous features of the legend. The Song of Deborah (Judges v.), our nearest approach to a contemporary document, appeals to no such memories of the past. Apart from two obscure references to a Covenant God (Baal-Berith or El-Berith) whom the Israelites are reproached for worshipping (Judges viii. 33), and whose house is burned down by Abimelech (Judges ix. 46-9), there is no trace of any historical cult of the God of Sinai.

The Samaritan highlands, collectively known as Mount Ephraim, contained a number of popular shrines, but there is no evidence that the same Baal was worshipped at them all, nor that their cults were distinctively Israelite in origin. Mizpah (a name meaning " watch-tower ") stands out as the favourite tribal centre, where the folk-moots were most frequently held, and there if anywhere a God named Israel ought to have been worshipped. On the other hand Bethel was more probably the shrine of a local Genius named Jacob, as Hebron was of Abraham, and Beersheba of Isaac. The God of Shiloh first comes to the front in the story of Benjamin.

The writings of the prophets show equal ignor-

ance of anything more than a vague tradition of the Exodus. The earliest of them, Amos (750 B.C. ?) does not appear to have heard of Mount Sinai, or of Moses. The name of Moses does not once occur in the great book of Ezekiel, which laid the foundations of historical Judaism. The real Moses, as Ezekiel may be fitly termed, legislating for the restored Jerusalem of his hopes, never appeals to the authority of his legendary predecessor. We shall find the strongest reason to believe that the whole substance of the legend is the work of Jewish scribes labouring to reunite the scattered remnants of the empire of David.

To similar efforts, perhaps of earlier date, must be ascribed the mythical genealogies in which a common ancestry is found for all the Semitic inhabitants of Canaan, and the two great immigrations are linked together by the fascinating tale of Joseph and his brethren—one source of which has come to light in the Egyptian novel of the Two Brothers.[1]

In the meanwhile there had been a real amalgamation, little to the taste of a later generation, since it included the very Canaanites and Jebusites, Hittites and Amalekites, who are pointed out in the legend as objects for extermination. The warring tribes of Canaan were brought together at last by their common sufferings at the hands of a new race of oppressors, alien in blood, in speech, in manners and religion, to the race of Ham as much as to the race of Shem. The true makers of the Hebrew-speaking nationality, in so far as it ever came into being, were the people who have left their name upon the map of *Palestine*.

The Philistines, who invaded the seacoast not

[1] Given in Flinders Petrie's *Tales of Ancient Egypt*.

very long after the Israelite clans had settled in the central highlands, were an uncircumcised and almost certainly a European people, coming probably from the Aegean Sea.[1] If they were connected with the Dorians who settled in Crete and Sparta in the same age,[2] we can understand how the Jews of Maccabean times came to claim kinship with the Spartans, and the historian Tacitus to assign a Cretan origin to the Jewish nation.[3] In spite of the original differences of race, religion and language, the Philistines became so completely absorbed in the general population of Canaan that we are unable to detect their separate existence in the Palestine of the New Testament.

This European strain in the ancestry of the Jews opens an interesting vista to speculation. The name of the Dorians points to the worship of Thor, and the iron mines of the North played a great part in the rise of the Baltic nations. The substitution of this metal for bronze must have conferred a military advantage like that which we derive from fire-arms, and the conquests of the Dorians seem to mark the transition from the Bronze to the Iron age in Hellas. It was not till after 1000 B.C. that iron came into common use in

[1] The Philistines are now generally supposed to be a colony from the Isle of Crete, being the representatives of the Minoan people. This point is fully dealt with by Mr. H. R. Hall in his work in collaboration with Mr. L. W. King on *Egypt and Western Asia in the Light of Recent Research*, ch. v. Minoan pottery has been found in the mounds of Philostra; and, indeed, all along the Palestine coast traces of the Minoans as colonists, pirates, or temporary settlers are found. The question has been discussed very fully by Sir Arthur Evans in the Journal of the Hellenic Society.

[2] The Cretan Minoan civilisation preceded and was overthrown by the Dorian invasion. The Minoan culture came to an end about 1200 B.C., and the Dorian invasion was 1100 to 1000 B.C.

[3] In the eighth year of Rameses III, the Pulista or Philistines, with a number of people from the Isles and North Syria and Asia Minor, invaded Egypt, and Mr. Hall regards the Philistines as Cretans or natives of the Greek Islands, preferably Crete.—Hall's *Egypt and Western Asia*, pp. 668-70.

the Semitic world ;[1] and the Philistines are found holding the Hebrews in subjection by their monopoly of the blacksmith's craft.

> Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel ; for the Philistines said : " Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears " . . . There was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan ; but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.—(Samuel xiii. 19, 22.) (The statement must surely be understood of iron weapons, or no fight could have been possible.)

The mountaineers of Ephraim furnished the natural core of the nation now at last in the making. Hitherto they had played a part in Canaan rather like that played by the Spartans in Greece. Formidable to their brethren at ordinary times, they were looked up to as champions against the foreigner. This superiority they resumed on the disruption of the new kingdom after Solomon's death. The state founded by them retained the name of Israelite, and much exceeded in strength and importance the paltry kingdom of Jerusalem. One of its kings, Omri, whose reign has been passed over in spiteful silence by the priestly historians, achieved a power probably greater than David's, and impressed his name on the Assyrian mind.[2]

All the more remarkable is it to find the leader in the war of independence, and the first national

[1] Iron was in use in Egypt in the earliest time, as early as the sixth dynasty, 3300 B.C., but it probably came from the African tribes of the Sudan. In Babylonia it was known and used as early as 1800 B.C., but in this case it was meteoritic iron.

[2] Yehu, the successor of Omri, is mentioned in the Black Obelisk of Shahnamuar II, 885 B.C., as a tributary, and is called Jehu, the son of Omri ; the reason for this being that Samaria was called among other nations the city of Bet Omri, " the House of Omri," being founded by that ruler. Jehu is called Son of Omri, as the Assyrian scribes supposed him to be the descendant of that king.—W. St. Chad Boscawen.

king, a man of the comparatively petty clan of Benjamin, which had nearly been extinguished in the past by Ephraimite hostility. Saul was prudent enough to secure the friendship of an Ephraimite seer, the celebrated Samuel of Rameh, who gave an oracle in his favour; but the Ephraimites continued to hold aloof until the exploits of the Benjamite hero had made it clear that a powerful God was fighting on his side.

This God, to all appearance the object of an old and widespread cult in the land of Canaan, was the immortal YAHWEH, or Jehovah.

5. *Yahweh*

Seen from the outside, the history of the Jews shows them coming in touch, one after the other, with all the great religious cults of the Western world. The Jewish religion is thus an epitome of religious evolution, and the character of the Jewish God exhibits in turn every phase of theological thought. He is the family Genius of the Bedawin sheikh, holding familiar intercourse with him in his tent; and he is the Thunder Spirit veiled in clouds upon his holy mountain. He is the King of Jerusalem, jealous of every rival near his throne; and he is the far-off Lord of the hosts of heaven, whose angels do his errands upon earth. He is now the Great God of the Hindus, and now the Mighty God of the Persians who holds the worship of the Great God in abomination. He is God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; yet he remains through all the Covenant God whose chosen people are bound to him by the most primitive of all indentures.

The Divine name of the Jewish deity changes as often as his nature. He is the singular El or

Allah, and the plural Elohim. He is El Shaddai and El Elyon, Baal and Moloch or Melek. His most popular designation in the kingdom of Jerusalem was Yahu or Yahweh, a name variously explained by scholars as meaning "breath," "being," or "creator"—in short the Living God. All these are, like the Persons of the Hindu and Christian Trinities, successive aspects of Divine Power. The revelations of God are cumulative. In offering what seems to me the true account of the revelation of Yahweh to the Israelites, I do not mean to suggest that his cult has been more than an element in the full-grown monotheist faith.

The war against the Philistines opened with the capture by them, and ended with the recovery by David, of a sacred chest, known as the "ark of Yahweh," containing a potent juju or medicine, and kept in the rustic sanctuary of Shiloh.

Taking a leaf out of the book of a former dynastic founder, Gideon or Jerubbaal, who had set up an "ephod" in his city of Ophrah, to attract the worship of his subjects, David solemnly installed the venerable trophy in his new capital of Jerusalem, to serve the same purpose. Already invested by its adventures in the war with a national character, the ark of Shiloh was eminently fitted to be the emblem of a national religion such as would get rid of the old tribal jealousies by subordinating all the ancestral cults to that of Yahweh. Nor must we leave out of sight the consideration that David and his subjects firmly believed in the juju. In their eyes the provision of such a spiritual fortification for Jerusalem was no less important than the erection of walls and towers. The more intelligent, indeed, distinguished between the fetish objects concealed in the ark, and the God himself whom they worshipped as a Great

Spirit. Yet it was certainly the vulgar belief that Yahweh was locally present in the ark, in a way in which he was present nowhere else; and the same belief is still entertained by very many Christians.

It was natural that the later worshippers of Yahweh should throw their own ideas back into the past, and suppose that this venerated box had accompanied the old clans on their march, and that the God of Israel had always been worshipped by the same name. But these assumptions, running through the priestly history, are contradicted by the more genuine features of the tradition, as well as by the probabilities of the case. The establishment of the national religion was part of a general transaction. The clans were settling down. They had exchanged the life of shepherds and herdsmen for that of cultivators of the soil. It is unthinkable that in that age they could have done so without a corresponding change of religion. Men could no more practise the art of agriculture without a good understanding with the Gods of agriculture than they could build half a house or go clothed in front and naked behind.

The revolt against the Philistines was the revolt of men who had long been compelled to repair to the forges of their oppressors "to sharpen every man his share and his coulter and his axe and his mattock." It was entirely in keeping that it should have been immediately provoked by an outrage on an agricultural shrine, one especially endeared to the clan of Benjamin by its past association with a crisis in their tribal existence.

The sanctuary at Shiloh enjoyed no vogue among the Israelites in general at any time after or before the war of independence; for a statement inserted in the Book of Joshua to the effect

that the tabernacle of the Mosaic legend was set up there is an obvious postscript to the legend. Had there been any contemporary tradition or belief of the kind the Israelite folk moots must have been held at Shiloh rather than at Gilgal and Mizpah ; and if the ark of Yahweh had been regarded as a national palladium before its capture by the Philistines it could scarcely have lain forgotten during the distresses inflicted previously by the Moabites and Midianites.

In this case the priestly historians have left us ample material for refuting their own assertion. The genuine tradition of Shiloh introduces it to us in connection with a clan feud between the Ephraimites and Benjamites, and in terms that show it to have been a shrine of only local celebrity, apparently still in Canaanite hands.

> These writers have taken extraordinary pains to connect their favourite Samuel with the shrine at Shiloh, by one of the most delightful tales in the Old Testament. They have then characteristically dropped him entirely out of the story of the ark, and recorded that he lived and died at Ramah, and " judged Israel " at the usual tribal centres, Mizpah, Gilgal and Bethel. Severity is out of place in criticising such childlike minds.

The tribe of Benjamin, we are told, had been so ruthlessly slaughtered as to be in danger of extinction, the only survivors being a few hundred men who had escaped from the last battle with the Ephraimites.[1] In these circumstances they were reduced to seek wives from another stock. According to one account their late foes were generous enough to massacre the inhabitants of a place called Jabesh-Gilead, only sparing four hundred virgins whom, for no reason offered by the narrator, they brought " to Shiloh which is

[1] The story of Shiloh is given in the last chapter of Judges.

in the land of Canaan." (Judges xxi. 12.) In the second and more probable story the Benjamite survivors go to Shiloh and seize a number of maidens taking part in the religious rites of the place.

"Behold there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly, which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. . . . And, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin." (Judges xxi. 19, 21.)

These elaborate directions, so unlike the ordinary references to shrines like Bethel and Mizpah, indicate that Shiloh lay as yet outside the Israelite settlements, and was but little frequented by them before it thus became identified with the Benjamin clan. However much tradition may have magnified the episode, it is clear that every Benjamite must have come to revere Shiloh as the second womb of the race, and the Genius of the shrine as its Creator and Preserver. Perhaps Saul was descended from one of the maidens who had danced before the ark of Yahweh, and the story had been told him at his mother's knee. If so, we may understand how the news of the Philistine outrage wrung his proud heart, and how he and his clansmen bound themselves never to rest till the uncircumcised heathen were driven from the sacred soil of Yahweh.

The exact history of the ark's adventures can only be conjectured, but I am inclined to adopt the view that the Philistines raided and sacked the sanctuary, and carried off the ark as a fetish likely to benefit themselves. I also think it likely that some accident or misfortune roused their superstitious fears, though

hardly to the extent of causing them to restore it to the enemy; and in this way it acquired prestige among the Canaanites at large. Obed-Edom of Gath, from whose custody David at last receives it, was apparently a circumcised native, dwelling in the Philistine territory.

Both versions of the Benjamite tradition point clearly to the fact that Shiloh was a spot propitious to the end in view, the preservation of the clan by means of offspring. In other words the Baal worshipped there was a God of Increase, the same who is found in the book of Genesis promising to Abraham that his seed shall be as the sands of the sea for multitude, and who miraculously bestows a child on Sarah. In the legend of Samuel we find a barren woman repairing to Shiloh on a like errand, and the birth of the prophet is the result. So also when the wife of David on a later occasion reproaches him for taking part in the coarse dance appropriated to the God of the ark, the deity takes a characteristic vengeance by shutting up her womb. (2 Samuel vi. 20-23.)

The later Puritans have naturally exerted themselves to cover over this particular aspect of Yahweh. In the end even his name was felt to be objectionable, and it was replaced in speaking by one more associated with vegetation—that of the Syrian Adonis, in Hebrew *Adonai*, the "LORD" of the English version. (The rabbinical explanation that this change was made out of reverence for the Ineffable Name sounds like medieval fantasy. It carries us back to the magical stage when a God's name, like a man's, was concealed to prevent his enemies from casting a spell upon him.)

The life-giving Power worshipped by the name of Yahweh did not confine his activity to the

increase of the human species. He was the Spirit of universal fertility, and patron of the husbandmen, so that Canaan was in a very literal sense his Holy Land. That interrupted dance of the virgins was a May dance, apparently begun round a maypole, or sacred pillar, in front of the shrine, and prolonged into the vineyards as a magical ceremony to ensure the fruitfulness of the vines. One of the medicines preserved in the shrine itself was a "rod that budded," in fact, what the English folk call a *palm*. (Numbers xvii. 10.)

In his first avatar the God of the Jews is plainly revealed as the God of Life, that universal Energy of Nature who was worshipped as Pan by the Greeks, and all over prehistoric Europe under the form of the Goat; that Great God (*Mahadeo*) who is the most popular in the Hindu pantheon to this day. For the enlightened Brahman Mahadeo is the cosmic Energy pictured in the Lord's Song. For the less philosophical mind he is a personal Spirit or Spirits like those of the Christian Trinity. For the ignorant masses he is the juju stone that the women of the village smear with melted butter. We must allow for these different points of view in the history of Yahweh.

It has been generally recognised since the publication of Inman's *Ancient Faiths in Ancient Names* that the "calves," or rather young bulls, erected by the legendary Aaron, and the historical Jeroboam were emblems of Yahweh. Writing of one such image in Perrot's collection (p. 668), Sir W. M. Ramsay says: "A glance at the figure is sufficient to show that he is worshipped as a symbol: he represents and embodies the generative power of nature: there lies behind him the Divine power of growth and life, which he expresses." (Hastings' *Dict. Bible*, v. 115.) The

Bull constitutes a link of importance between the Natural and the Solar cults.

This religion of Canaan was particularly fitted for David's purpose because it forms a natural stage in the evolution. The ancestral tribal cults merged almost insensibly into the Generation cult. The pedigree was merely traced one step higher. The Source of Life had been revealed under a new name, no longer as the Divine Father, but as the Creator. The Israelite mind was being prepared by degrees to receive the Babylonian myth of the creation as it is told in Genesis. From this time onward the mythical Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph sink into mere mortals, and Yahweh steps into their place as the one national God.

> In addition to the palm the ark of Yahweh must have contained other medicines, some of them perhaps bequeathed from prehistoric fetish cults, and adopted as emblems of the Great God. The collection included at least one stone, the "stone of testimony"[1] possibly a meteorite, possibly a flint used for circumcision, or a rudely carved symbol, but in any case regarded as in a special manner the representative of the God. There is something truly catholic about primitive religion, and all kinds of different symbols and fetishes may be crowded into the same receptacle. In this way it comes about that the same local Baal seems to figure at one moment as a Thunder God, at another as a Wine God, and at another as a War God, and the first step is taken towards monotheism.

We are about to see the cult of Yahweh very greatly modified, if not transformed entirely, by the local cult of Jerusalem. Nevertheless his primitive character has left two deep prints on the

[1] Exodus xxv. 16. It must be a matter of conjecture when the original fetish was replaced by inscribed tablets—if the latter were ever more than a pious imagination of the scribes.

Jewish nation and religion, one in the remarkable absence from the Mosaic law of any reference to a future life,[1] except that which a man lives again in his posterity, and the other in the more ineffaceable mark which unites the Jew with the aborigine of Australia. In spite of all Puritan changes the Worship of Life still lies at the core of Judaism, as it does not lie at the core of Christianity. The law of Moses is a law of health. The astonishing vitality of the Jewish race, its cheerfulness after ages of persecution, its noble self-respect in the face of Christian contempt, its long memory for benefits as well as injuries, its very selfishness of a not wholly mean and ignoble type, its practical benevolence and untiring industry, all these elements of manhood find their support in the character of Jehovah.

[1] The Anglican bishop Warburton, in a book called the *Divine Legation of Moses*, appeals to this as a proof of revelation.

CHAPTER XI

THE HOLY CITY

1. The Sadducees. 2. The Law. 3. The Prophets.

THE turning-point, it might be true to say the starting-point, in the history of the Jews was taken when David transferred his capital from the city of Abraham to that of Melchizedek. By this favourite of the Gods the final emancipation of the Hebrew inhabitants of Canaan was achieved, and the power of the Philistines so utterly broken that they almost disappear from the subsequent narrative. Under the long reign of his son the land lay in peace, and the Holy City, enriched by tribute and commerce, and beautified by the labours of Phœnician workmen, dazzled the vision of the Bedawin world beyond, and attained a legendary renown like that of Timbuktoo. The glorious moment was never forgotten. David became the hero-king of national legend, like Arthur and Charlemagne, and the wealth and wisdom of Suleiman Ben Daoud are still the theme of every story-teller in the bazaars of Asia and Africa.

It is worth remarking that neither of these famous personages had much claim to the name of Israelite, nor any historical link with the Mosaic legend. David is assigned by the genealogists to the highly factitious "tribe" of Judah, invented for the benefit of the mixed inhabitants of the region still known as Judea. But the pleasing tale of Ruth gives him a Moabite ancestress, and we find him seeking Moabite protection for his father and mother in time of danger.[1]

[1] 1 Samuel xxii. 3.

An " altar-hearth," or " arch " of David (" Dawdoh ") is referred to in the inscription on the Moabite Stone. He is also found taking service with the Philistines, and in his later days surrounding himself with a bodyguard of foreign mercenaries.[1] The mother of Solomon had been married to a Hittite,[2] and we may infer from the silence of the Jewish writers that she was of the same foreign stock. The importance of this will be best understood in the light of the history of Queen Tye and the Aten Disk.

We have already seen the conqueror of Zion introducing the ark of Shiloh into his new capital. We are informed in one place that a colony of Benjamites had attained a lodgment in the lower town at some previous period,[3] and David's action may have been prompted by them. In any case it was a politic stroke to acquire such a hold over the tribe of Saul ; and David's foresight was rewarded when the Benjamites, or a part of them, refused to join in the Israelite revolt against his dynasty.[4]

In the meanwhile the peculiar sanctity of Jerusalem did not originate with, and did not wholly depend on, the cult of Yahweh. The story of the Holy City goes back to days when every city was hallowed by the relics of its foundation God, who lived on in its hereditary line of sacred kings. The mysterious figure of Melchizedek, the priest king of Salem, receiving tithes from the Father of the Hebrews, and blessing him in the name of " the Most High God," is the most im-

[1] Called Cherethites and Pelethites (2 Samuel xv. 18). The following mention of Gittites from Gath, and the stress laid upon the recent arrival of Ittai, justifies this interpretation.

[2] The murdered Uriah.

[3] Judges i. 21.

[4] 1 Kings xii. 21 and 23.

pressive in the Old Testament.[1] Underneath the fiction (if it be one) there is evident a very real veneration for the *Genius loci*, whose name has lived on in that of the *Sadducees*.

The divine name, Zedek, has been found on coins, and it is preserved in the names of both of the prehistoric kings of Jerusalem of whom we hear anything, Melek-Zedek and Adoni-Zedek.[2] It is borne by the priest, Zadok, who conspires with Bathsheba to place Solomon on the throne, and ejects the Israelite priest Abiathar from the capital,[3] and who can only be regarded as the religious successor of his royal namesakes, reduced by David to the rank of a *rex sacrificulus*. Ezekiel, himself a descendant of the same stock, is careful to assert its exclusive claim to the priesthood in Jerusalem (xliv. 15). And throughout the subsequent period the Zadokites or Sadducees, in spite of their worldliness, their scepticism and their unpopularity, retain their position as the official caste, the custodians of the Temple and the Law. The hereditary priesthood of the capital, in fact, pursued a policy not unlike that of the Vicar of Bray. They were willing to call their God by the name of Zedek or Yahweh, to sacrifice to Saturn or to the Sun, to become monotheists with the Persians or polytheists with the Greeks, but their views on the qualification for the priesthood, and on tithes, only gained in firmness through all the revolutions in their theology. Their jealousy of the political kingship was an inherited instinct. The theocracy set up by Ezra was a revival on a higher plane of the theocracy of Melchizedek, and there is at least one trace of this in the Gospels.[4]

[1] Genesis xiv. 18.

[2] See these names in Hastings' *Dict. Bible* and the *Encycl. Biblica*.

[3] 1 Kings ii. 35.

[4] In the prophetic character ascribed to Caiaphas as high priest (John xi. 51).

While the cult of Jerusalem thus had its roots in the deepest soil of Canaanite belief, it underwent at least one important change before it was merged completely into the cult of Yahweh. The word variously spelt *Zedek*, *Sodek* and *Sadok*, is translated "righteousness," and *Suduk* or *Sadyk* is the Righteous God[1] in the Phœnician pantheon. We can hardly suppose that the name of a primitive Canaanite chief had any such exalted meaning. We are here in touch with a new order of ideas. Astrological science is at work, teaching men to raise their eyes from the bones under their feet to the stars over their head. The Most High God of the Melchizedek legend is certainly a celestial deity. Perhaps the victim interred beneath the wall of Zion had borne the same name, but in an older and ruder signification. Perhaps the stellar patron saint of Jerusalem was chosen on scientific grounds, with the aid of horoscopes and geomantic art. There are some grounds for the suggestion that the choice fell on the star of the North Pole.[2]

The Pole Star is certainly the one best entitled to be called the Just One by mariners, and its Genius to receive tithes from the Genius of Saturn represented by Abram. According to Philo-Byblius, Suduk had seven sons (the stars of the Plough ?), but the evidence of such a writer is nearly worthless. The choice lies, perhaps, between the Pole Star and the Sun, the Righteous God of the farmer.—Questions like these may have been debated between the living

[1] Compare Rawlinson's *Hist. of Phœnicia*, pp. 35-37, and 339-348.

[2] I must content myself with a general reference to the literature of astrological mythology, from Dupuis' *Origins* to the works of Gerald Massey. Many of these identifications are merely ingenious, many contain an element of truth. It is as unreasonable to overlook the astrological orientation of the monotheist pyramid as to ignore the mummy at its heart.

Zadok and his Tyrian architect, and submitted to the judgment of Solomon!

This much stands out clearly, that the ancient God of Jerusalem escaped the fate of all the other rivals of Yahweh. The worship of the moon, and of the national planet, is sternly denounced from time to time by the prophets. The emblems of the sun were formally removed from the temple. The silence with which "Zedek" passes out of sight admits of only one satisfactory explanation. His cult was amalgamated with that of Yahweh. His worship continued under the more popular name, and his attributes were credited to the national deity. Justice is a quality wholly foreign to the God of Increase. Life in itself is neither righteous nor unrighteous. From the moment righteousness is laid stress on as an attribute of Yahweh, the Hebrew religion has made a step in advance.

Everything invites us to identify the change with the king whose name has become proverbial for wisdom. We have a curious story suggesting that David, in his zeal for Yahweh, had neglected the local Genius of Jerusalem; that his superstition was roused by a plague; and that in order to stay it he vowed to set up a shrine for Zedek, and bought land for the purpose from one of the God's native followers, Araunah the Jebusite.[1] If so, he did not live to fulfil his vow, and the task of erecting a temple worthy of the new kingdom was left to his successor.

> It may be expected that I should take some notice of the views of those grammarians who have recently undertaken to rewrite the Old Testament in the light of linguistic conjecture, without

[1] 2 Samuel xxiv. It is necessary to read between the lines left by the Puritan editors.

regard to the unanimous evidence of history and archæology, Egyptology and Assyriology, anthropology and astronomy, to say nothing of common sense. They inform us that almost every other name in the Bible is a corruption of the "blessed word" Jerahmeel; and that half the recorded incidents took place in the obscure region hitherto known as Edom. It was to this unknown seat of civilisation that Solomon turned for the arts and sciences that he introduced into the capital of his kingdom. From Edom he drew the "cedars of Lebanon" and those mighty blocks of stone, still standing, and greater even than the description of them in the books of Kings and Chronicles, which correspond in every detail with the structures of Phœnicia.[1] His Edomite vassal (or suzerain ?) equipped the fleets that sailed to Ophir and Tarshish, and perhaps explored the coasts of Britain. I should be glad if I thought these extravagances would shake the faith of the vulgar in the infallibility of the specialist. (Yet we must feel tender towards these sins of the "Higher" criticism when we remember what "criticism" it has replaced.)

The first instinct of a people that has acquired power and wealth is to raise itself to the artistic and scientific level of its more civilised neighbours. The traditions of the Hebrews directed them to the great Semitic seaports under the Lebanon, at this moment at the height of their prosperity. It cannot now be argued that the Hebrews who imported the architecture and metallurgy of Tyre did not at the same time import the Phœnician astronomy and religious ritual. The temple must exercise an influence over the cult. The Tyrian masons were of course a religious guild accustomed to build on a regular plan, and the house of Yahweh as put up by them was naturally a

[1] Consult Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, 94-99.

fairly close reproduction of the Phœnician temples of Melkarth and Astarte.

In one feature, it may be thought, the temple of Solomon followed a more venerable model. The Egyptian temples had long been converted into observatories, and were so constructed as to receive periodically a ray of light, striking in upon a mirror in the innermost sanctuary, from the celestial body to which the building was dedicated. There is an apparent connection between this custom and the Hebrew tradition of the Shekinah, the mystic light by which the presence of Yahweh was revealed in the Holy of Holies.

> This interesting parallel is pointed out in Lockyer's *Dawn of Astronomy* (pp. 92-93), referring to Josephus. It is immaterial in one sense whether this architectural effect was actually obtained by the Tyrian architect employed by Solomon. The tradition sufficiently attests the presence and the influence of astronomical ideas.

The temple of Jerusalem, it is manifest, was in fact a pantheon, embodying the science of the age—the wisdom of Solomon. It contained as many Gods as the medicine-box of Shiloh had contained juju medicines. In addition to the ark of Yahweh, and the mysterious "glory" of Zedek, it received the idols and emblems of all the fashionable cults of the day, sacred pillars and brazen bulls, a brazen serpent and horses of the sun. In all this there was certainly nothing to offend the conscience of any contemporary Jew or Israelite, nor do we meet with any sign of Puritan protest until the fall of Samaria shook the heart of Jerusalem, and gave birth to the first prophetic reformation.

During the two hundred years that elapsed between the reigns of Solomon and Hezekiah the

current ran strongly in favour of the Solar Faith. We have seen already that in the religious evolution the discovery of the sun as the true source of life was the next step in advance, after the discovery of his righteousness. The creative power, hitherto ascribed to Yahweh as the Genius of Life, was traced to the solar orb, and it only remained to think of Yahweh henceforth as the Genius of the sun. The change was helped in the present case by the local influence of Zedek. It may well be that the House of Yahweh had been designed by Solomon from the first as a solar temple; in any case there is abundant evidence that the worship of Yahweh assumed more and more the character of a solar cult. The author of the book of Joshua, after recording the arrest of the sun and moon, adds: "There was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man"—language which is unintelligible unless it is the sun who is here referred to as "the Lord," since God is represented as always hearkening to prayer. The prophet Amos, after denouncing the shrines of Bethel and Gilgal, and the worship of Saturn, calls upon the Israelites to turn to the God "that turneth the shadow of death into morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Yahweh is his name)."[1] We may feel some surprise at this early knowledge of the law of evaporation; but it had been anticipated by seven centuries in the Aten Hymn.[2]

[1] Amos v. 8.

[2] See Petrie's *History of Egypt*, vol. ii., p. 218: "In this hymn all trace of polytheism and of anthropomorphism have entirely disappeared. The power of the sun to cause and regulate all existence is the great subject of praise, and careful reflection is shown in enumerating the mysteries of the power of the Aten exemplified in the animation of nature, reproduction, the variety of races, and the source of the Nile, and watering by rain."

The religion of Jerusalem followed the fashion set by Tyre in other and worse respects. The famous, or infamous, *King* ("Moloch") to whom children were sacrificed in the Valley of Hinnom was a faithful copy of the bull-headed, brazen idol that consumed the hapless youth of Carthage, and all the Phœnician cities round the Mediterranean. In this hideous rite there is something more than sun-worship. It is the first glimpse of Puritanism, and of the Inquisition. The Religion of Fire is seen afar off, kindling frightfully amid the smoke of sacrifice and the stench of human blood. Zarathustra found something to reform in his own faith. The widow-burnings of India bear witness to the old belief in sanctification by fire; and the Persians had good reason for their prohibition of the superstitious cremation of the dead.

The God of Jerusalem was becoming less and less a merely local Genius, and more and more of a cosmic and universal deity, when his national character was sharply recalled by the triumphant advance of the Assyrians. These were the true Israelites of the ancient Semitic world, the great protagonists of nationalist religion in an age fast advancing towards the Universal Faith. For them, whatever astrological or other deities received their homage, there was only one supreme God. Assur was his name, and the Assyrians were his chosen people. In his name they fought, and their conquests were his conquests. It was the old ancestral worship of Moab and of Ammon and of Israel bursting up like a volcano in the midst of a more scientific age, and justifying itself by its works.

Before the Assyrian march the petty kingdoms round Jerusalem went down like wooden pins. The worshippers of Yahweh trembled at their

scientific infidelities, and their thoughts travelled back to the war against the Philistines, and the fainter memories of the old invasion. Samaria fell in the year 720 B.C. About the same time Hezekiah ascended the throne of Jerusalem, and called Isaiah to his councils.

2. *The Law*

The piety of Hezekiah showed itself in his expulsion of the celebrated brazen serpent from the temple. It does not follow that he was an iconoclast, much less a true monotheist. The incident runs parallel to the legendary tale of Dagon, the Philistine idol who was found broken in the morning after a night passed in the company of the ark of God.[1] The jealous and vindictive character of the Benjamite fetish was no doubt a popular tradition, however it arose.[2] It fitted in well with the Assyrian theology, which was still the worship of a supreme, rather than a sole God. There were other Gods beside Assur, or Yahweh, as the case might be, but to burn incense to them in his presence was an act of dangerous disrespect.

The history approaches closer and closer to the Mystery. The monotheist sentiment was still in its infancy; and we see the Sun-God strangling the serpent beside his cradle.

The faith of Hezekiah in the national God was justified by the event. The army of Sennacherib, after summoning Jerusalem on its way to invade Egypt, was recalled home under circumstances that have never been explained. The deliverance

[1] 1 Samuel v. 4.

[2] Compare the fate of the innocent Uzzah, in 2 Samuel vi. 6, and the fifty thousand men slain for looking into the ark at Bethshemesh, 1 Samuel vi. 19.

impressed the Egyptian mind as the miraculous work of Horus.[1] The Jews as naturally credited their escape to Yahweh. It was an intervention worthy to rank with the legendary destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and it must have made a deep impression on the popular mind. The scientific Solar Faith had had its day. As the darkness thickened, and the catastrophe drew nigh, the nation turned in its despair to the old worship of Yahweh as the Covenant God of Israel, and called upon him by that name.

During the next hundred years the Holy City remained standing alone, like an obelisk whose companion has fallen, the last stronghold of the Hebrew race, while the armies of the great empires passed and repassed. Although the sins of Judah were no lighter than those of Israel in the eyes of many of the prophets, the feeling grew steadily that Zion enjoyed the peculiar favour and protection of the God who had fought for Israel of yore, and had taken up his abode in the city of David. This feeling found vent in what is called the reformation of Josiah.

The innovations of Hezekiah, carried out under the auspices of a great prophet, were inspired by a true reverence for Yahweh, and were religious in character. Those of Josiah (637-608 B.C.), prompted by priests and scribes, had a distinctly political complexion, and seem to have been engineered in the worst spirit of priestcraft.

Assyria was now visibly breaking-up, and the eagles were gathering round the carcase. The province of Samaria lay derelict without an organised government; and the opportunity was a tempting one to undo the work of Jeroboam, and restore the realm of David. The foreign colonists planted on the soil by the policy of the

[1] Hephaistos, according to Herodotos, Eut. 141.

Assyrian government had been asking for some one to teach them the right way to propitiate the God of the land. (2 Kings xvii. 26.) The Sadducees had never any doubt on that head, and their views fitted in with the political ambitions of Josiah. He proclaimed that the only acceptable worship of Yahweh was that offered in the temple at Jerusalem, and he followed up this step by sending emissaries into Mount Ephraim to pull down and desecrate the local shrines. Bones were burnt on the altar of Jeroboam—a juju curse of appalling ferocity. The rural shrines of Judah were logically included in the edict. (2 Kings xxiii. 5 and 15-16.)

The political object was not an unworthy one, but the move was certainly another step backward instead of forward, from the standpoint of spiritual religion; and the means were still more degrading than the end. What looks like an elaborate comedy was played in the Jewish capital. The high priest discovered among the account-books of the temple a long-lost roll described as the "book of directions." A scribe carried it to the palace, and solemnly read it aloud to the king, who rent his garments in sign of dismay on learning how widely the nation had departed from the right way. A prophetess was consulted, and delivered an oracle pronouncing the roll to contain the true law of Yahweh, the very terms of the covenant made between him and his people as the condition of their possessing the land of Canaan. (2 Kings xxii.)

Such is the story related in the Book of Kings, but not corroborated by the great contemporary prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is idle to try to reconstruct a forgery, but we may imagine that the priests actually found an old service book, and that its perusal revealed that considerable

changes had crept into the ritual. How much of the present Pentateuch or Book of Deuteronomy was contained in the roll as read out to the king, must be left to conjecture, but among the "directions" due to the advisers of Josiah, rather than to Moses or Solomon, we may safely include the interdict laid on parochial worship and parochial tithes :—

> "There shall be a place which Yahweh your God shall choose [to cause his name] to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto Yahweh.
>
> "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest; but in the place which Yahweh shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee," etc.—(Deuteronomy xii. 11, 13, 14.)

The Jewish chroniclers have extolled the piety of Josiah, and pretended that the fall of Jerusalem was deferred on his account. It would have been truer piety to see the punishment of his falsehood in his premature death in battle, and the extinction of his dynasty in the next few years. The whole Israelite legend contains no more dramatic judgment than followed on the forgery of Hilkiah the high priest, and Shaphan the scribe. The declaration that Yahweh must be worshipped only in Jerusalem seemed to draw down the long suspended wave of ruin that rolled over the site of the Holy of Holies; and the children of Shaphan and Hilkiah were driven forth to worship in exile.

The old fetish box and its contents vanished in

the storm; and this time we hear of no miraculous intervention; no sacrilegious hand is palsied among the hosts of Nebuchadnezzar. The ark disappears silently from the narrative—a loss for superstition but a solid gain for faith. The Spirit of Yahweh accompanied the vessels of his shrine to Babylon (586 B.C.), and it was there that the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem were raised during the next three centuries.

At the end of fifty years the Persian conquest of Babylon (538 B.C.) was followed at some uncertain date[1] by the rebuilding of a temple at Jerusalem, and by the end of another hundred years (445 B.C.) the city walls were also restored. But we must not mistake these historical events for important ones in the life of Judaism. In fact the temple of Yahweh could not be rebuilt; the walls of Jewry were henceforth to be of stronger material than stone. It was a saying of the rabbis that only the bran of the nation returned to Jerusalem; the wheat remained in Babylonia. The synagogue there long continued to be the Sorbonne of the Jewish world.[2] The famous mission of Ezra is a type of the educational influence that came from the Captivity. The restored Jerusalem was a place of pilgrimage, a Mecca rather than a Rome. We have to take our stand on the banks of the Euphrates, and gaze over the desert that cuts us off from the home of our forefathers, from "the city of David, the royal city," before we can feel the glamour and the mystery of the great Dream of the Ghetto.

[1] The famous period of seventy years savours strongly of astrology. It is found as a prediction in Jeremiah xxv. 11.

[2] The one at Nehardaa on the royal canal between the Euphrates and Tigris was said to have been built of stones brought from the temple of Jerusalem. From it the caravans set out, carrying the sacred tribute of the Babylonian Jews. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus*, i. 7-8.

We must not be misled by the literature of the second century before Christ, in judging of the sixth. The poems of the Book of Daniel are as noble as anything in Hebrew literature, but they are cryptic satires on the Seleucid kings, and not genuine legends of the past. The celebrated prophet Jeremiah appears to have welcomed the fall of Jerusalem as a righteous judgment on its sins. He was imprisoned, if we can trust his biography, by the Jewish authorities as a Babylonian partisan, and was protected by Nebuchadnezzar.[1] One of the unknown poets, whose works have been added to the roll of Isaiah, hailed Cyrus in language strongly resembling that of the Persian conqueror's own inscriptions.[2] In short, the Jewish religious mind was still in the plastic stage, as ready to take colour from the more civilised cults of Babylon and Persia as formerly from those of Canaan and Phœnicia.

In Babylon the Hebrews found themselves in the legendary cradle of their race. They corrected their own traditions in the light of the Babylonian myths, and revised their national laws and ritual under the influence of the code of Hammurabi and the worship of Bel and Istar. But the grand scheme of the Old Testament owes little to Babylonian inspiration. The nearest prototype of Moses is Zarathustra.

A little consideration will show that the Puritan Faith is the Nationalist Faith in a new avatar. The spiral has returned to the same point on a higher plane. The first coincidence is obvious enough to strike every mind. The cult of Yahweh and the cult of Ormuzd are equally free from idolatry. The Hebrews had never risen to the level of the idolater; the Parsis had risen above

[1] Jeremiah xxxix. 11-12.

[2] See Sayce, *Fresh Light from the Monuments*, 2nd ed., p. 140 *et seq.*

it. Yahweh ascended straight from the condition of an unhewn stone ; Ormuzd descended from the Universal Energy of Fire. The worshippers of both were at heart, as we all are, worshippers of a Man Outside, a magnified reflection of the Man Inside. Neither had portrayed the Genius in marble.

The true *eidolon* of the Puritan as of the National God is his worshipper, made in his image. We have seen the savage trying to shape his offspring to the tribal pattern ; and the Puritan does the same by means of what he falsely calls education. The process becomes more terrible as it becomes more universal. The worshippers of Ormuzd divided mankind into the friends and enemies of Ormuzd, the former deserving and requiring to be reformed after the heart of their Maker ; the latter marked out for extermination in his honour. These atrocious principles, softened to the Aryan mind by its long training in astrological religion, came home only too closely to the Hebrew mind with its memories of clan warfare and butchery.

The recent experience of the Jews had done much to prepare them for monotheism. The Puritan Faith was not one that could be merely added on to an existing cult, and flourish side by side with it. Either the national God of the Hebrews *was* the Mighty God of the Northerners, or he was one of his enemies. The Hebrew prophetic writings show that the identification was made readily. As the Genius of their race had formerly put on the characters of Yahweh, the God of Increase, and Zedek, the God of Righteousness, and Elohim, the Stars in their Courses, and Adonai, the Sun, so now he donned the dreadful face and fiery arms of Ahura-Mazda, Creator, Preserver and Destroyer.

The transformation was one of which it is easier to recognise the results than trace the detailed history. There is no evidence of deliberate proselytism on the part of the Persian monarchs. On the contrary, they showed much respect for the Babylonian cults, especially that of the Sun-God Marduk, whom there was already a tendency to regard as the chief lieutenant of Ormuzd, his Son or Logos, if not himself. It is generally supposed that the Persian Court fostered the attachment of the Jews for political reasons, and encouraged the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a safeguard for their southern frontier.

> The conqueror Cyrus shows so much friendship for the Babylonian gods as to raise the suspicion that he was not a sound Puritan. And this trait, which we learn from Babylonian sources, seems to explain the conspiracy of the Magi to raise one of themselves to the throne in the next reign, as related by Herodotus. The false Smerdis, as we have seen, withdrew the government patronage from the Babylonian temples.
>
> When Greek and Babylonian and Hebrew records are thus found to illustrate and confirm one another, the historian may feel that he is not engaged in pure guesswork.

It would be unwise to pronounce that even by the time of Ezra the great legend of Israel had reached its full development. Still less can we decide how far it was ever meant by its authors as history, and how far as parable. When the Pauline writer pronounces Hagar and Sarah and Sinai itself to be an allegory,[1] he seems to give away the secret of the rabbis. Their minds, in any case, did not feel the need that the modern mind feels, to distinguish between the history and the Mystery. The Egypt of the Mosaic legend is

[1] Galatians iv. 24-25.

thus only half a geographical Musri. It is also the land of Ignorance and Sin, with Pharaoh as the King of the Abyss. The story of the Exodus is in some sense what the most credulous Christians have felt it to be, the story of mankind. It is the myth of myths. It is the exodus of the human race from savagery, and it is the redemption of the soul from sin, figured in one age as the Labours of the Sun among the Signs, and in another as the Pilgrim's Progress from this life to that which is to come; figured here as the march of God's Chosen People out of bondage into the Promised Land.

There we may leave it, as we found it, a sacred history.

For the Hebrews, or some among them, it became much more. The faith that they were a Holy People, called out of all the earth by the Creator, to dwell in his Holy City in his Holy Land, took firm possession of the devout element among them, which we may now begin to recognise and distinguish by the name of Pharisee. It is a faith rooted in a deep aspiration of the human mind; rooted also in science. In vain does Goethe's returned emigrant in Wilhelm Meister declare: "Here or nowhere is my America." The prophet of America itself returns to the old burden of an historical Exodus to a better Land on a site beneath the sun :—

"Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!"

3. *The Prophets*

It has become part of the great Israelite myth that the whole history of the nation and of the world was revealed in advance to a class of seers whose inspired predictions were fulfilled by the after course of events. To call such a belief false is not to criticise it adequately. It is immoral, as everything is that tends to distract men's attention from the duty of the present to dreams of the future. This is the besetting sin of the modern Spiritualists. Were they less anxious to learn the conditions of the next life, and more anxious to learn how to spend this one aright, they would not so often fall a prey to cheats and persons of unsound mind, or, as they themselves put it, to deceitful spirits. In the same way when men form themselves into a Reception Committee for the coming Messiah, we know before hand that the only Messiah they are capable of welcoming will be one on their own low moral and intellectual plane, as the life of Jesus the Nazarene has demonstrated.

The glory of the Hebrew prophets is, not to have truly foretold the future, but to have truly seen the present, and so to have transformed the whole idea of the prophetic character—" for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." (1 Samuel ix. 9.) He that is now called a divine was beforetime called a diviner. It was by their work as moral and religious reformers that the prophets were the forerunners of the Christ. They did not foretell the circumstances of his career with the quaint particularity believed in by the first preachers of the Gospel. But they did better; they rehearsed the part. Each of the prophets was himself the Messiah of his day and generation.

The wizard of the prime, the first Divine Man, appears in many aspects in the Old Testament. We see him as the hereditary Genius Loci in Melchizedek and his successors. We see a sacred Brahman caste in the Levites, whom it was esteemed lucky to secure in the character of chaplains, or priests of private shrines: "Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing that I have a Levite to my priest."[1] (Judges xvii. 13.) The Sadducees were obliged to make terms with this caste, employing its members in the more menial service of the Temple, and including themselves with it in an Israelite "tribe." Again we see the priests in charge of the various local shrines giving responses by means of the magical apparatus of the urim and thummim. We are offered the picture of an ideal prophet in the stately Samuel, who judges Israel, and makes and unmakes kings. But the true representatives of the Divine Man must be sought in that order of dervishes which is still to be met with all over the Muhammadan world, enjoying much the same veneration now as in the past, although their authority as teachers has been severely circumscribed by the infallibility of the Koran.

More free than the modern orders of Christian monks, the dervishes are found sometimes dwelling together in colleges, sometimes roaming from place to place; now leading solitary lives in the wilderness, and now invading courts and cities to address counsels and reproofs to nations and their rulers. The theory is that the dervish by his way of life keeps himself in touch with God. He cultivates that sensitiveness to the Hertzian waves from Heaven which is the beginning of genius. The words that come out of his mouth are not his own, any more than the words in a telegram are

[1] Compare the Brahman's letter above, p. 156.

those of the operator. And so he is rightly called by the Greek name *pro-phetes*, which does not mean foreteller, but for-teller—"speaker-on-behalf-of."

It is related that Saul, before his rise to the kingship, joined a company of dervishes ;[1] and the story well accords with what we hear of his morbid and melancholic temperament. The troop in question played on musical instruments ; and in the same way the renowned Elisha calls for a harp to stimulate his prophetic faculty.[2] We are still in the age when the functions of poet and musician, hero and prophet, were undistinguished. From this protoplasm of genius there emerged from time to time men of commanding powers. David himself, if not a prophet, was a bard.[3] Like the more noble Alfred he seems to have led his people in literature as well as war, and his name clings to the immortal hymn book of which he may have been the first compiler. In his turn he listened to the exhortations and rebukes of the dervishes Gad and Nathan, as a king of the Catholic ages listened to his confessor, or trembled before a Savonarola.

The greatest of the dervishes was Elijah, whose fame still extends over the whole area of Islam as well as Christendom. His career illustrates the evolution of the prophet into the tribune of the people. The revolt of Jeroboam had been provoked by the burdens laid upon the Israelites to support the magnificence of Solomon and the Solar cult. A hundred years later the same cycle of events repeated itself in the northern kingdom. The conqueror Omri, founder of the new capital of Samaria, was succeeded by Ahab, who married a

[1] 1 Samuel x. 10.

[2] 2 Kings iii. 15.

[3] 2 Samuel i. 17.

Sidonian princess, and introduced the Phœnician sun worship, more openly than Solomon had done, and in a more exclusive spirit. It would appear that Queen Isabel, whose character has been distorted into that of a Cleopatra, must have been a devotee of the nascent Puritan Faith, or at least a monotheist, who wrought to put down the coarse nature cults still named after Yahweh, much as Queen Tye had wrought in Egypt in a former age.

It is remarkable that the malice of the scribes of Jerusalem has only found one serious charge to bring against the Pharisaic Jezebel, apart from her proselytising zeal. Even in this case, the judicial murder of Naboth, her crime compares favourably with David's murder of Uriah, inasmuch as her motive was to please her husband. The king himself is no party to the plot, and does penance on learning of it.[1] On Ahab's character there is no stain whatever; he was on friendly terms with Elijah himself,[2] and his evil reputation must be attributable solely to his indulgence of his wife's Nonconformist Conscience.

The misrepresentation took its rise naturally in the rivalry between Jerusalem and Samaria. When the southern worshippers of Yahweh had become Puritan devotees in their turn, hundreds of years afterwards, they ignorantly or wilfully mistook the nascent Puritanism of the hated Queen Isabel for that very nature worship it was directed against.

However, the Israelites had learnt from Solomon to associate civilisation with taxation, and their experience in the reign of Ahab taught them to associate Puritanism with intolerance. The popular discontent was aggravated by a long drought, a real intervention of Heaven on behalf

[1] 1 Kings xxi. 27.

[2] 1 Kings xviii. 46.

of the victims of persecution, and one which the superstition of the age could only attribute to the wrath of the God of the land against his enemies. The legend of Elijah is chiefly valuable for the light it throws on the religious conditions of the age, in which we see the most primitive magic meeting and triumphing over the most advanced science. At the same time there is hardly a detail in the story that does not sound more or less historical. The contest is between the town-bred priests of the Sun and the solitary dervish of the desert, and as it is a contest of weather prophets the advantage naturally rests with the primitive rain-maker rather than with the temple astrologer.

We are assured that Elijah had foretold the drought,[1] and we may take it at all events that he was not slow to claim it as the work of the incensed Yahweh, and perhaps as due to his own prayers. The superstition of Ahab is evidently aroused, he seems to credit the holy man with the consequences of his curse, and sends everywhere in search of him.[2] But Elijah as a true weather prophet waits till he feels the rain coming. In the meantime the priests of the Phœnician Baal, who, like more modern priesthoods, have outgrown the art of prophecy, have to obey the king's command. Their Prayer for Rain, like Elijah's, is made in sign language; they cut their flesh with knives till the blood flows—a doubly magical rite in which we see the element of sacrifice mingled with that of prayer. These incantations, repeated doubtless week after week in the house of the Sun-God in Samaria, fail to break up the brazen sky. At last Elijah's trained faculties tell him that the weather is about to change, and like the

[1] 1 Kings xvii. 1.

[2] 1 Kings xviii, 10.

thunder-maker of Nigeria, he makes the most of his miracle. If we say that the voice of the Lord warned him we shall be using his own language[1] and expressing his own faith. He bids the king accompany him to a hill overlooking the sea, from whence the rain may be expected to come. His charm is the one familiar to every savage rain-maker. He pours out buckets of water before the rude altar on which he at the same time roasts a young bull calf, the representative animal of Yahweh in the northern kingdom. The sacrifice, of which the king partakes, is hardly eaten, when the first cloud makes its appearance on the western horizon, a little cloud, like a man's hand. "And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

The Jewish chronicler boasts that the triumph of savagery over civilisation was followed by a massacre of the foreign missionaries.[2] If so, they ought to be reckoned as the first Protestant martyrs, since their religion was far nearer to ours in essentials than was that of the great dervish.

Modern religion and modern science have long been in a conspiracy to put down prophecy, whether religious or scientific. The crust of the mind hardens like the crust of the earth, and the positivist offers a firm resistance to revelation. If prophets continue to arise they are listened to only in the character of poets. Writers like Rousseau and Goethe, Whitman and Carlyle, stand in the true apostolical succession, but the conventional fiction is that they are only to be considered as literary craftsmen.

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 1.

[2] 1 Kings xviii. 40.

> Just as the Messianic sects invariably reject the Messiah, so those who call for imagination in science, and profess to regret that Goethe did not devote himself entirely to scientific studies, strike the living Goethe across the mouth as soon as he begins to speak.
>
> A high priest of Positivism has recently recorded that on the solitary occasion of Tennyson's opening his mouth in the meetings of the Metaphysical Society, his observation was laughed at.[1] The poet, it seems, ventured to ask if the rising of the sap in plants did not oppose the "law" of gravity. His thought afterwards found expression in the lines—"Flower in the crannied wall."

Similar influences were at work in the last days of the Israelite and Jewish kingdoms. Elijah was almost the last of the Hebrew dervishes. The first of the literary prophets appears in the person of Amos, a hundred years afterwards, and from his time onward the prophet becomes less and less of a wizard and more and more of a poet.

Even now the prophet cannot be spoken of as a poet without some impropriety. The difference of names marks the deep distinction between Hebrew and Hellenic literature. The Greek poet (*poietes*—"maker") is a creative artist in the same class with the sculptor and the painter. He may keep up the form of invoking his Muse, but his mind is turned outward, so to speak, attentive more to his expression than to his impression. Hebrew literature is still in the volcanic stage, and the writer's mind is turned inward. We see him bending over his consecrated lyre, listening for the still small voice from within, and panting forth his broken utterance as it wells fresh from the depths of his underself.

The burden of the first prophets was the coming

[1] Frederick Harrison's Memoirs, vol. ii, p. 86.

calamity of all the Syrian peoples at the hands of the Assyrian conqueror; and the fulfilment of their forebodings naturally kept up the ancient notion of the prophet as a seer. But it was not as vulgar fortune tellers that they wrote, and that their writings have become immortal. They wrote as students of theological and moral science, bent on exploring the laws of national well-being, and finding remedies for national disease. They were not Christians, in the strict sense, because they thought as socialists rather than as individualists. Yet it is clear that they were working out the same problem of the relation between Man and his Creator. The Book of Job is the parable of righteous Israel, yet it is also the parable of the righteous man.[1]

The diagnosis of Amos is simple. All the nations are to suffer, because all have sinned. The miraculous escape of Jerusalem for a time, as we have seen, revived or intensified the nationalist theology; and the prophets began to take the tone so admirably rebuked by the parable of Jonah, that all the Gentile nations are wicked, and delivered over to destruction, while righteous Israel is entitled to special consideration. Under the influence of the Puritan Faith this perverse view of the Divine government of the world developed into a cruel and insane fanaticism, which drew down the destruction of the Holy City and the millennial martyrdom of the Chosen People.

The remedies proposed by the prophets, on the other hand, bring us steadily nearer to the teaching of the Gospel. At first there is a disposition to lay stress on the false virtues of orthodoxy and ritualism. Yahweh is to receive special and, in the end, exclusive devotion; and other cults are to

[1] "The first problem novel" as my friend, Mr. G. F. Abbott, points out.

be put down and persecuted in his honour. Sacrifices are to be offered up, tithes are to be paid, and the stately ceremonial of the temple is to command the support of the whole nation. The ritual morality of washings and circumcision, new moons and sabbaths, is to be practised in all the rigidity of a magical formula. But these prescriptions fail to satisfy the conscience of an Isaiah. The note of the coming Religion of Humanity is struck as early as in the prophecy of Amos, if we can trust the obscure text :—

> "Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes."

It is no disparagement of these men of genius to set them in their true light as transmitters, not inventors, of morality. They evangelised a savage and a backward race with a message that reached them from elsewhere. The cry of the slave had gone up from the crowded alleys of Babylon and of Benares ages before it echoed in the ears of the free Bedawin. All civilisation has rested upon servitude. The Israelite clans in settling down in Palestine had suffered the same change that passed over the Scottish Highlands after the last Jacobite rising, and converted the chiefs into landlords, and the free clansmen into tenants. In morality as well as in theology, the Jews have been learners before they became teachers.

There are some grounds, however, for connecting the great age of the prophets with a world-wide movement, as though the gospel of humanity formed a part of that planetary revelation which ushered in the historical era. In the same years when Amos was alarming the conscience of Israel, an Ethiopian conqueror was setting up a stele in

the heart of Egypt on which he declared himself unwilling that the children should weep in Memphis.

> Professor Flinders Petrie, in his *History of Egypt* (vol. III., 276), has compared the inscription of Pankhy I (748-725 B.C.) with the humanist movement in contemporary Greece. If the translation be sound, we have evidence from the same stele of the existence of sectaries whose manner of life resembled that of John the Baptist. The humane king denounces "the sect hateful to God, which they call 'Do not cook; let violence kill.'" But the text seems to need further elucidation.

In the end the cleavage between ritualist and altruist morality became distinct. The forces of the priesthood and of the rich class, and the still stronger forces of superstition and cant, were ranged on the side of the Law, then as now. On the side of a purer worship and a happier morality stood the Son of Man, but he stood almost alone. Humanity is willing to be saved, but only on its own conditions. It will accept happiness at the hands of Herod or Caiaphas, but not at those of Jesus the Nazarene. The character in Dickens who declared that he would rather be knocked down by a man with Blood in him, than be picked up by a man without, spoke for the mass of mankind. So when Dickens himself, and when Carlyle, and when Spencer, in vain solicited for the privilege of serving in the humblest public office, each of them was refused. Not this man, but Tite Barnacle!

Was this ambition on their part? Is it ambition that breathes in the memorable cry?—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto

thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

It is in vain that men ask good things of evil gods. Until men learn to tolerate their saviour, he cannot save them. Other Christs must be crucified, and other Jerusalems must go down in ruin, till this truth is taken to heart by humanity. Man has no right to be unhappy; but God will not go on sending his angels into Sodom forever.

CHAPTER XII

THE MESSIAH

1. The Messianic Faith. 2. The Dream of the Ghetto. 3. The Good Tidings of Damnation. 4. The People of Christ.

BEFORE the dynamic whirl known to seamen as a waterspout shoots down its long finger-shaped sucker from the clouds, the sea beneath can be seen forming a whirlpool as it were in sympathy. In the same way the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, or, if that expression be objected to, the belief in his incarnation, was preceded by the creation of an inchoate society, which that event crystallised into the existing Christian Church. It is usual and convenient to distinguish these proto-Christians from the converts of Peter and Paul by using the Hebrew word Messiah in place of its Greek equivalent Christ. The first name looks forward to a Saviour who has yet to come, the second looks back to one who has come.

To say this is not to prejudge the question, excluded from the present survey, of the historical character of the Gospels. The point is that on no view of the facts can Jesus the Nazarene be classed with Muhammad and Mrs. Eddy as the founder of a religion, or even of a society. His position, whether as man or as myth, in the Christian system is that of the keystone, and not that of the foundation-stone. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner"—that saying epitomises the historical criticism of his extraordinary destiny. In tracing the rise and growth of the Messianic Faith we are in fact tracing the gradual formation of

the Christian Church within the womb of the Synagogue.

It is apparent that the Messianic Faith was not a plant indigenous to the soil of Jewry. The Jews had no national hero for whose return they hoped as the Britons hoped for the return of Arthur; no Frederick Barbarossa slept in mound awaiting the hour to come forth at the head of his knights and work a national deliverance. Such a belief would have run counter to the disbelief in immortality which stamped the orthodoxy of the Sadducees. In the very last years there arose some expectation of the reappearance of Elijah, whose legend left him still alive, but he was looked for as the herald of the Messiah rather than as that personage himself. (*Malachi* iv. 5.)

The Messianic Faith entered the Ghetto from outside, and made its way gradually as a popular belief, and not as an article of the established religion. There is no trace of it in the Law, the only standard of faith binding on the whole nation. It does not appear in the Book of Ezekiel, which constitutes the real starting-point of Judaism as a definite religious system. It is equally absent from the Psalms and from most of the other books of the Old Testament, unless we are to notice a few texts which have been wrested from their natural meaning by minds of that backward and defective intelligence that is content to rest spiritual truth on material trifles. Some of the hymns which have found their way as additions or interpolations into the roll of Isaiah are Messianic in expression, but the faith that inspires them is something widely different to the faith into whose service they have been pressed, as we shall see presently. The genuinely Christian scriptures begin with the Book of Daniel in the second century before Christ, and it is significant

that the hero of this sacred romance is an astrologer, and that his visions are steeped in astrological imagery. The book or books of Enoch, appearing on the eve of the Christian era, develop the astrological vein. The Book of Revelation is a Messianic rather than a Christian tract,[1] although the introductory exhortations to the churches of Asia Minor may have been added by a Christian hand. The original author was clearly not thinking of Jesus the Nazarene when he described "one like unto the Son of Man."

> "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."—(*Revelation* i. 14-16.)

Sir Isaac Newton was probably right in supposing that some of the celestial scenery in the book was suggested by the Temple of Jerusalem, notably the seven lamps and the sea of glass. But the symbolism of the Temple was itself copied from more important fanes dedicated to astrological cults; and constellations like the Dragon and the Virgin are unmistakably alluded to by the seer of Patmos. It was perhaps the strongly astronomical character of this work which fascinated the great author of the Principia himself.[2]

Enough has been said on this subject[3] to establish a connection between the Messianic Faith of the Jews and the similar beliefs and hopes inspired in all the surrounding peoples by the

[1] Recent criticism attributes the greater part of it to a Jewish rather than Christian writer. See *Encycl. Biblica*, Apocalyptic Literature.

[2] Newton's work on Prophecies, of which I have a copy, does not deserve the contempt it has received. Granting the premisses, the reasoning is sound enough.

[3] Above, ch. vii.

greatest astrological event of the last two thousand years. If the substitution of the Fishes for the Ram as the celestial dropscene of the Resurrection of the Sun at Easter did not itself have any physical effect upon our planetary life, there can be no doubt that the *belief* in its importance has affected human history to an extent unperceived by the historians whether of religious or secular affairs.

> In the language of astrological allegory, the entering of the Sun into his new Sign was a new avatar of the Divine Saviour. By the popular ear such language was easily understood as the prediction of a human Saviour arising in the East. To prove this to the satisfaction of a legal casuist we should have to reconstitute the lost chap-books of the time, the scriptures of the slums. The candid mind needs no assurance that there were Mother Shiptons in Antioch, and Old Moores in Alexandria.

In the celestial chart of modern Europe the signs of the Zodiac are as strictly fenced off as if their frontiers were those of hostile kingdoms, and our astrological gnostics have endeavoured to fix the Era of the Fish with the exactness of an astronomer calculating an eclipse. (Massey adopts the date 255 B.C.) But the cosmography of the ancients was as loose as their geography. They could divide Africa from Asia by the Nile instead of the Red Sea, and they could divide the Fishes from the Ram at whatever point on the ecliptic enabled them to flatter the reigning king with the title of Saviour or Epiphany. (Ptolemy Soter, 322 B.C.; Ptolemy Epiphanes, 205 B.C.) This courtly science accounts for the continuous renewal of the same prediction during eight or nine hundred years, and its successive application to Zarathustra and Cyrus, Alexander and Augustus. The prediction is last heard of in

connection with Elagabalus, after whose time the Christian Church soon became strong enough to impose its own interpretation on the popular mind. The prophecy was fulfilled. The Christ had indeed come.

While everyone was agreed in looking for some great change, and for some saviour, the widest differences prevailed as to the character and work of the Messiah. For the Pagan world generally he was to be no more than a king of divine character, establishing peace and prosperity among mankind. But the whole Messianic Faith was so dependent on the Solar Cult from which it sprang, that the Messianic hymns constantly read like transcripts from the Easter litanies, in which the returning sun of spring was hailed as the renewer of life and redeemer of mankind from death. This is equally true of the language of Isaiah and of Virgil. The Roman poet, in a birthday ode, has confessedly adapted the Sybilline oracles to the purposes of mere compliment; but what was poetry for him was serious prophecy for the masses, and his eclogue therefore affords us a valuable glimpse into the popular mind in the last Pagan century.

> "Now the Virgin returns, now the Kingdom of Saturn returns, now a new progeny is sent down from high heaven. By means of thee whatever traces of our sins remain shall be wiped out, and the world released from everlasting terror. He shall rule a pacified earth with the virtues of his father. . . .
>
> "For thee, O Child, shall the earth without being tilled produce her early offerings. . . . Thy cradle shall pour forth pleasing forms about thee.
>
> "The goats shall bear to the fields their udders distended with milk; nor shall the herds be afraid of great lions. The serpent shall die, and the treacherous poison herb shall die."—(*Virgil.* Ecl. iv.)

The likeness between these expressions and those of the Isaianic hymns shows that they were the common stock of the psalmists of the proto-Christian world. The Catholics, who saw the resemblance, eagerly claimed Virgil as an unconscious witness to the truth of the Gospel, and their enthusiasm caused them to overlook the fact that these poetical visions have never been realised to the outward sense. The wise believer will prefer to interpret them of the serpent and the cockatrice within, the evil passions subdued by grace. The unwise one will continue to look for their fulfilment in some future earthly millennium, regardless of the words : " The kingdom of heaven is in your midst."

Especially important for the history of Christianity is the Pagan poet's reference to sin, and release from everlasting terror. It is such slight clues on which we must depend for the right understanding of the rapid spread of Christianity ; and they are ignored in most of the histories. The Pagan world did not need to be aroused to the sense of sin, and the fear of the wrath to come, at least not to the extent that has been commonly supposed. We are here opening another of those chapters of history that must be rewritten as soon as our minds have recovered from the Catholic spell. The truth is that a Gospel of deliverance had been preached for some centuries before Christ, and had been accepted by the greater part of the educated Mediterranean world. It was the Gospel of Epicurus, the great antagonist of those Stoics in whom we have already seen the Gentile followers of Zarathustra. Epicurus has played a far greater part in the evolution of religion than we have been allowed to see by our Byzantine schoolmasters. It was from him that Lucretius learned to rid men of their spiritual terrors by

explaining the laws of nature. Virgil himself had found salvation in the Good News of the great adversary of the Puritans. "Happy the man (he writes elsewhere) who has been able to understand the cause of things, and trodden underfoot all fear, and deaf Fate, and the roar of devouring Hell."

It was the poor and ignorant who were not so to be delivered; who stood in need of a Gospel more adapted to their superstitious minds, and of a Saviour who could release them from their fears with the simple words: "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

2. *The Dream of the Ghetto*

The Messianic Faith, as it grew up in pious Jewish minds after the time of Ezra, took the same nationalist tinge as the rest of their religion. But beyond that no definition of it seems possible. The materials that went to build up this expectation were themselves too various and contradictory to lend themselves to a system. The disputes and heresies that racked the Church in the first centuries after Christ are, so to speak, the reflection of the conflicting views of the last centuries before.

Among these diverse elements we may distinguish (1) ancient poetic texts not originally bearing any Messianic character; (2) the Gospel according to Isaiah; and (3) the Gospel according to Zarathustra.

The great Book of Isaiah is a collection of prophecies, of various date and authorship, which have been ascribed to the famous contemporary of Hezekiah, much as the Psalms have been ascribed to David, and the Proverbs to Solomon. In the same way a collection of miscellaneous poems by many hands, entitled *The Passionate*

Pilgrim, was formerly printed under the popular name of Shakespeare; and there must be few living publishers who would not be glad to resort to the same device for pushing the works of unknown authors. It is neither a very hopeful nor a very useful task to try at this time of day to fix the character of every fragment, but we may agree with Paine and the higher critics in recognising a very broad gap between the oracles that have some bearing on the circumstances of the old kingdom of Jerusalem, and those that refer to subsequent events, and finally to a quite different scheme of religion.

As an example of the kind of utterance which has been pressed into the service of the Messianic Faith may be quoted the eleventh chapter of the book as we have it, in which the language of Virgil's eclogue is echoed almost phrase by phrase.

> "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord . . . With righteousness shall he judge the poor and give sentence with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked . . .
>
> "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

If all this were meant as prediction we could only say that it had never been fulfilled. It is rather aspiration. It may be compared with the hopes of Dante and Machiavelli for a Prince who should set up the good estate in Italy, and with those romances in which our contemporary Socialists outline the happy future of their dreams.

The perverse ingenuity of a certain critical school would undertake to dissect even a document like this, and mark the shares of two distinct contributors. It had in fact many thousand contributors. I have already suggested the hymn book of the sun-worshippers as the immediate pattern of this kind of poetry. But the solar liturgy was, no less than the solar eucharist, an adaptation of yet older things. Perhaps no heathen king ever was anointed in all the millenniums before Christ, without some such outpouring as this from the court laureate. There is perhaps no expression in the Virgilian and Isaianic canticles that does not go back to the age of those kings who took oath to make the sun shine and the rivers flow. The more we learn to see things in their true perspective, the less use we shall have for the blurred microscope of the textual scholar.

From the class of Messianic texts properly so called we must also exclude the references, especially numerous in the Book of Isaiah, to the Redeemer of Israel. In the mouth of the Hebrew prophets this title is applied to Yahweh himself, in his character of a national Providence, and conveys no suggestion of anything in the nature of an atoning Saviour.

"Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God."—(*Isaiah* xliv. 6.)

"There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me."—(xlv. 21.)

"Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God."—(xlviii. 17.)

"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One."—(xlix. 7.)

The confusion of the Christian mind on the subject of these utterances is shown in the chapter headings of the English Bible, which apply them

alternately to God and to Christ. Some of the Gnostic sects more boldly identified Jehovah with the Logos, or in other words with the Second instead of the First Person of the Catholic Trinity. In their opinion it was the Son, and not the Father, who had presided over the religious history of Israel, who had wrestled with Jacob, shown himself to Moses on Sinai, and shared the meal of Abraham. More orthodox sects in the present day have been disposed to take a similar view of some of these "theophanies," or personal apparitions of Yahweh.

The substantial truth of the Christian revelation has nothing to lose, and very much to gain, by being relieved of the load of meretricious prophecy which it owes to the mistaken zeal of the early Christians. Their system too much resembled what Macaulay, in criticising Gladstone's *Church and State*, described as a forged bond with a forged release indorsed on the back of it. Having falsified the Old Testament in their search for literal predictions, they were obliged to falsify the New in order to provide literal fulfilments. The result was to land them in hopeless contradictions. The "foolish genealogies" which they put together to fulfil a supposed prediction that the Christ should be a descendant of David, only embarrassed them when they came to deal with another supposed prediction that he should be the son of an unmarried woman. The escape from these deplorable entanglements is an escape from the mental atmosphere of Peter to that of Jesus the Nazarene.

We enter upon the region of true prophecy, a truly Messianic prophecy, when we reach the latter part of the Isaianic compilation. The Second Isaiah—to employ the only name by which we can now know him—was a thinker

engaged upon much the same problem as the author of the Book of Job. The author of that sublime work, who does not seem to have been an Israelite, dealt with the mystery of the sufferings of the righteous man. The Second Isaiah was exercised by the sufferings of the righteous nation.

The priests of every people and of every age have found it equally natural and profitable to attribute the public misfortunes to the wrath of the deity whose ministers they are; and in doing so they have shown a dim sense of the truth most insisted on by modern science, that we live in a universe of law, and that human welfare depends on man's success in learning and keeping the commandments of his creator. But the Jews of the period at which we are now arrived, that intervening between Ezra and Christ, unfortunately believed that they were in full possession of the divine will. The mind of God has few secrets from the monotheist. Like his Christian representatives of to-day, the Jewish Pharisee firmly believed that the book of revelation was closed. God had no more to teach mankind. His will was fully expressed in the Law of Moses. The Chosen People had only to comply with its requirements to entitle themselves to the full benefit of the promises made to their forefathers.

This confidence was rudely tried by the event. The contrast between the legend of Israel and the actual history of Jewry has excited the sarcasm of Gibbon. "When the law was given in thunder from Mount Sinai; when the tides of the ocean and the course of the planets were suspended to save the Israelites; and when temporal rewards and punishments were the immediate consequences of their piety or disobedience, they perpetually relapsed into rebellion against the visible majesty of their Divine King, placed the

idols of the nations in the sanctuary of Jehovah, and imitated every fantastic ceremony that was practised in the tents of the Arabs, or in the cities of Phœnicia. As the protection of Heaven was deservedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionable degree of vigour and purity." In short, to many a devout believer it must have seemed that just as the nation had begun to keep the Covenant of Sinai, the Covenant God had left off doing so.

In exploring this historical mystery the Second Isaiah found a solution in the doctrine of Atonement, and his language echoes the language of all the antique Mysteries of the Anointed. Israel was still the Chosen People, still the missionary of monotheism, and the light to lighten the Gentiles. But his wondrous mission was carried out at tremendous cost to himself. The Hero of the Divine Tragedy was to repeat the experience of other saviours since the world began. The righteous was to be the scapegoat of the unrighteous. Israel was being crucified for the sins of the Gentiles.

Such is the process of thought that seems to underlie those famous chapters that have served as the charter of the Christian Church. The note struck at first is one of future triumph.

> "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away," etc.—(*Isaiah* xli. 14-16.)

We have only to set these words beside those attributed to John the Baptist to see how the

rôle of Israel has been transferred to the individual Messiah.

> He who is coming after me is more powerful than I. His winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor, and store his grain in the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unextinguishable fire.—(*Matthew* iii. 11, 12.)

But the comfortable assurances that mark the earlier Messianic prophecies are exchanged for a more mournful strain as the prophet realises the actual misery of his nation, and perhaps his own.

> "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? . . .
>
> "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."—(*Isaiah* liii.)

Corrupt as is the text, and confused the English version, of these sentences, they remain the most influential that have ever proceeded from a mortal pen. It was to them that the first preachers of the Catholic Gospel appealed. It is to them that the truly Christian, as distinguished from the Puritan, mind in all ages has turned as the true keynote of the Christian religion. And no understanding of the life of Jesus the Nazarene is possible that does not take into account their influence on his mind.

> It is true that the prophet goes on, like the author of Job, to foretell the final prosperity and reward of his hero. But the true Christians have always referred

that reward in their own case to the next life, and in the case of their Master to his risen life in heaven and his second advent on earth.

The conception of a Messianic nation was too altruistic to be popular, and perhaps too grandiose for the ordinary mind. All nations worship the God of Battles until he has decided against them, and the mass of the Jews did not abandon their faith in the God of Joshua until some time after the destruction of Jerusalem. In the meanwhile the obvious consideration that all Jews were not equally devout led to the formation of a Ghetto within the Ghetto. The party thereafter to be known as the *Pharisees* assumed to themselves the Messianic rôle originally offered to their nation. In their mouths the term " Israelite," no longer given to the hated Samaritans, became the mystic title which distinguished the true servant of Yahweh from the mere Jew by birth. It is in this sense that we find it bestowed in the New Testament on Nathaniel—" an Israelite indeed " (*John* i. 47). The Pharisaic assumption of the name of Israelite may be compared with that of the Evangelical sects who reserve the name " Christian " for those who have gone through the spiritual experience of conversion, and thus practically refuse it to the great majority of the professed worshippers of Christ.

In the great Catholic Churches the Evangelical " Christian " is represented by the monk or nun, who is technically termed a " religious." And the Catholic " religious " preserves more closely than the Evangelical " Christian " the spirit of the Jewish Pharisee, inasmuch as he is considered to be playing on a small scale the part of a saviour. The " Christian " does not dream that his utmost exertions can avail to save even himself. His

righteousness is as filthy rags. But the righteousness of the Catholic monk is a substantial asset of the Church. Like the Buddhist, the Catholic accumulates merit, sufficient first to release himself from the pains of Purgatory, and afterwards to hasten the release of Catholic sinners in general. In this way the religious is a successor of the Pagan Christ, his superior piety ekes out that of the secular Christians, and by his stripes they are healed.[1]

The revolt of the Maccabees, in the second century before Christ, was at once the triumph and the failure of Pharisaism. It was a war of Jews against Gentiles, of monotheists against polytheists, and it ended in the victory of the righteous. The marvels of the Mosaic legend and of the crusade of Joshua were renewed in favour of the fanatics of the Law. Unhappily their victory over the Seleucid oppressor was not followed by the promised golden age. The Maccabean princes, as soon as their family was established on the throne of Jerusalem, proved the truth of the saying that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. There is a saying to much the same effect among the English Wesleyans : " One horse may take you to chapel, but two horses draw the carriage to church." The Maccabean kings owed their elevation to the Pharisees, and they ended by allying themselves with the Sadducees. Under their rule the Pharisees suffered a persecution more severe than any they had ever endured from the Hellenist tyrants of Antioch. The natural consequence was to turn the minds of some at least of them to a new solution of the problem of righteousness.

[1] I do not offer this as the technical teaching of any Church, but as my own impression of popular Catholicism.

The Gospel according to Isaiah was dropped in favour of the Gospel according to Zarathustra.

3. *The Good Tidings of Damnation*

We must turn back to the Parsi scriptures for the first outline of the Messianic Faith as it ultimately became a part of Catholic belief. In them we find all those distinctive features that are absent from the Pagan astrological predictions, and from the Hebrew books of the Old Testament. The golden age of Virgil, the Jewish kingdom of the elder Isaiah, is for the Parsis a more tremendous and universal change. The reign of the righteous is only to follow on the destruction of the wicked; and hence that undisguised joy in the impending catastrophe of the world which earned for the early Christians their reputation as enemies of the human race. Even in details the Christian scriptures copy the language of the Zend-Avesta and the Gathas. The great and dreadful day of Ormuzd is to be a day of judgment for the righteous and the wicked. A burning Caspian, or lake of fire, awaits both, but while the faithful of Ormuzd will feel themselves in a bath of warm milk, the heathen will be consumed in molten metal. The judgment is to be announced and executed by a divinely appointed agent, the Sosiosh or Saoshyant. If we can trust the Parsi accounts Zarathustra originally believed himself commissioned to discharge this superhuman office.

> "Through the whole of the Gathas (writes Professor Geldner) runs the pious hope that the end of the world is not far off. Zoroaster himself hopes with his followers to live to see the decisive turn of things, the dawn of the new and better æon. Ormuzd will summon together all his forces for a final decisive

> struggle, and break the power of evil for ever ; by his help the faithful will achieve the victory over their detested enemies the *daeva* worshippers. . . . Then the great act (*yah*) will be accomplished. Ormuzd will constitute a universal world-judgment."[1]

The prophet's death compelled his disciples to revise a part of their belief, and to look forward to a future Saoshyant, perhaps of the seed of Zarathustra, who should appear on the great Day, to judge the quick and the dead. The Catholic Church, faced with much the same problem, found a widely different solution. The first appearance of Christ, in the person of Jesus, was explained as being for the purpose of saving mankind by a vicarious atonement. On his second coming he is to condemn those who have failed or refused to take advantage of the divine indemnity.

The Parsi influence is first visible on the surface of Jewish literature in the cryptic Book of Daniel, in the beginning of the second century B.C. It is significant that the unknown author expresses himself alternately in Hebrew and Aramaic. This important culture change marks a not less important change in the mental atmosphere of Jewry, so that the Book of Daniel may be considered the bridge between the Old Testament and the New. The author encourages his countrymen to hope for some divine intervention in their favour on a scale worthy of their legendary past, but his vague and mystic language lifts the mind of the reader from national kings and earthly saviours to the region of what is called eschatology.

The prophet first describes a personage whom he names the Ancient of Days (the ancient Vainamoinen), but who is the same in appearance

[1] *Encycl. Biblica*, col. 5434. The whole article should be consulted.

as the Son of Man described in the Book of Revelation.

> "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of whose head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him."—(*Daniel* vii. 9.)[1]

The last words of this description recall the vision of Krishna-Vishnu in the Lord's Song.[2] How idle is it to try to force an exact theological sense upon passages like these, where the prophet has floating before his mind the celestial symbolism of a hundred creeds, the abstract features of all the Gods and Saviours of mankind! The Persian Saoshyant, that is to say, a celestial rather than an earthly Messiah, may be recognised in the following picture of the "Son of Man."

> "Behold, one like the (or like a) son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."—(*Daniel* vii. 13, 14.)

The phrase "son of man" is of a type familiar in almost every language, and its ordinary meaning is the same as "man" "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him; or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!" (*Psalm* cxliv. 3.) Ezekiel uses it as a solemn and poetical style for man, and there is no other sense visible in the present passage. But, as often happens, the application of a common phrase in

[1] For the corresponding passage in Revelation, see above, p. 279.

[2] Quoted above, p. 178.

a remarkable connection, gave it a special significance. The Book of Daniel, containing some of the finest poetry and the most popular stories in the Jewish literature, became a model for subsequent writers, whose prophecies, inscribed with the names of Noah, Enoch and the patriarchs, continued to come out from this time onward into the Christian era; and in this literature, known as apocalyptic, the title Son of Man steadily increases in importance as the designation of a celestial Messiah. The *Similitudes* of the Book of Enoch, a writing dated by students about a century before Christ, introduces the Son of Man as a veritable Saoshyant, the divinely appointed judge of the earth rather than the national deliverer of Israel.

We now have before us the chief elements of the Messianic Faith, and need not go on to recount the divers ways in which they were combined by different Jewish sects and parties. All but the Sadducees and Herodians, in other words all who had any lively religious feeling, entertained a Messianic Faith of some kind; but how ill-defined their notions were as to the character of the Messiah may be judged by the popular readiness to turn from Judas the Galilean to John the Baptist, from John to Jesus, and on the death of Jesus to abandon belief in him.

The most important division was between those who felt it their duty to resist the heathen by force, with or without a visible Messiah to lead them; and those who were content to wait for the appearance of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. Pharisees were to be found on both sides, but the party of non-resistance also included minor sects and societies. The Essenes dwelt on the eastern side of the Dead Sea in communities

of a decidedly Buddhist cast. The Therapeuts, or Faith-healers, whose monasteries lay outside Alexandria, were the seed-bed of the Gnostics. Other sects, more or less sober, broke like eddies from the seething whirlpool of religious excitement. The following passage in Josephus reads very much like a prejudiced account of the Galilean Church as described in the Gospels, following the Master into the wilderness, and listening to the Sermon on the Mount.

> "Another set now arose whose tongues were as mischievous as the weapons of the former. Though they shed no blood, their doctrines were worse than daggers, utterly contaminating the minds of the people. These enthusiasts under the pretence of religion propagated strange doctrines. They enticed the people into woods and solitary places, pretending that God had determined to give them absolute liberty, of which he would grant them infallible assurance by signs from heaven."—(*Wars*, II, x.)

Among all these parties and movements we seem to see the spiritual cyclone narrowing to its point. A reception committee was being organised in advance for the Messiah. From the Gospels and from the Acts of the Apostles we learn of pious individuals, and even of organised groups, already known as Disciples, Brethren of the Lord, and People of Christ, before the name of Jesus the Nazarene had yet been sounded in their ears.

4. *The People of Christ*

In the life of Jesus to be gathered from the first three Gospels he can hardly be said to come before us as the organiser of anything in the nature of a church or regular society. He is represented at the outset as a preacher of the Good

Tidings according to Zarathustra,[1] but afterwards as the teacher of a truth that strikes at the very root of eschatology and superstition: "The kingdom of heaven is in your midst." The people regard him as a prophet, and they flock about him, attracted more by his powers as a faith-healer than by his doctrines, which those nearest to him continually misunderstand. But even the members of this inner circle of personal friends continue to follow their usual avocations, and are found returning to them after the crucifixion. In any case the missionary work of the Master is practically confined to Galilee. Only vague rumours of him have reached the pious in Jerusalem, and he is unknown by sight to some of them at the time of his death.

Outside the small handful of followers who form, as it were, his personal escort on his last fatal journey, we may discern a larger circle of sympathetic onlookers, watching the Master's career with interest, but unable to make up their minds as to whether he is indeed "he that should come." To this class belongs the respectable person who is described as giving burial to his mortal remains—"Joseph of Rameh, a Councillor of good position, who was himself living in expectation of the Kingdom of God." There is no need to attribute the non-committal attitude of such persons to cowardice. They were honestly expecting a supernatural Son of Man, "coming in the clouds of heaven." Their crime was superstition. The Plymouth Brethren and other Second Adventists of to-day would similarly hold aloof from Jesus were he to reappear on earth in his former lowly aspect.

[1] Matthew puts the same words into the mouth of John the Baptist and of Jesus: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (iii. 4 and iv. 17.)

To the same respectable class must be assigned the two "disciples" of Emmaus. Not only is the whole story inconsistent with their ever having seen Jesus, but they are not even represented as having held a decided belief in him. Their language to their fellow traveller is that of the ordinary Messianic Pharisee.

> "Have you been staying by yourself in Jerusalem, that you have not heard of the things that have happened there within the last few days? . . . About Jesus the Nazarene, who in the eyes of the people was a prophet; and how the chief priests and leading men gave him up to be sentenced to death, and afterwards crucified him? But we were hoping that he was the destined Deliverer of Israel."—(*Luke* xxiv. 19-21.)

The most reasonable explanation of this and other similar passages in the Acts of the Apostles is that there existed in Jerusalem and in other places in Judea organised communities of Christians, in the sense of believers in the celestial Son of Man, whose existence had been revealed already to a series of prophets, and whose advent on earth was expected from hour to hour. The preaching of John the Baptist must have done much to stimulate this belief, and it might be correct to describe the proto-Christians in Judea as the Baptist Church.

The legend of Stephen the martyr ought to be one of the most trustworthy in the Acts. It is remarkably free from miracle. It reveals with frankness the jealous squabbling of the poor women of the community over the distribution of victuals—one of those touches of nature that a Catholic apologist was unlikely to invent. It ends by bringing on the scene the arch-enemy of the Jewish Church, and one of the figures in the New Testament whose historical character is least open

to question—Saul, or Paul of Tarsus. Yet we must choose between rejecting the whole New Testament chronology or recognising that the church in which Stephen was archdeacon was composed of Baptists rather than of believers in Jesus the Nazarene.[1]

The chronology of the English Bible assigns the death of Stephen to the same year as the crucifixion, and to change the date would give rise to a whole crop of other difficulties. At Easter, then, the followers of Jesus consist of a small group of Galileans who are scattered in flight to their native province. Yet immediately afterwards, and long before the story of the resurrection has had time to get abroad, the city of Jerusalem is found to contain a church so numerous that seven bishops or stewards are required to preside over the daily distribution of food, in order that the Greek-speaking, or foreign-born, widows may not be neglected in favour of the natives. Widows! How long must a community have been in existence for one section of it to complain that their widows are being overlooked?

Stephen holds his office long enough to acquire a reputation as a preacher, and to be singled out by the Jewish authorities as an obnoxious one. The defence put into his mouth is curiously silent on the subject of Jesus the Nazarene, till the closing sentence.

> "Your ancestors . . . killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One; of whom you in your turn have now become the betrayers and murderers—you, who received the Law as transmitted by angels, and yet failed to keep it."—(*Acts* vii. 52.)

[1] This and the following objections to the popular scheme seem to have been overlooked by Mr. G. R. S. Mead, whose admirable monograph, *Did Jesus live* 100 B.C.? analyses the case for identifying Jesus with the Yeshua ben Panthera of the Talmud.

Immediately after he is represented as exclaiming: "I see Heaven open and the Son of Man standing at God's right hand." We cannot now be sure whether these two titles, "Righteous One" and "Son of Man" are meant to refer to the same personage, since there was much confusion on the subject in the minds of the proto-Christian sects. However, that is not the point. We may reasonably suppose that Stephen personally had become a believer in Jesus, and looked forward with confidence to his speedy return in glory to discharge the Messianic function of Judge of the whole earth. That is the first Gospel in its simplicity. As soon as Stephen and others like him had evangelised their brethren, the Galilean fugitives were recalled to Jerusalem, and installed in authority as witnesses of the resurrection, and lieutenants on earth of the ascended Lord.

The same impression is conveyed by the story of Paul, as related by himself and by the compiler of the Acts. According to the latter, Paul, starting from the death of Stephen, spends two years on a heresy hunt through Judea (not Galilee), and wherever he goes he finds churches to persecute. Paul's own testimony in the Letter to the Galatians is substantially to the same effect.

> "I was still unknown by face to the churches of Judaea which were in Christ; all that they heard was—The man who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith of which he once made havock."—(*Galatians* i. 22, 23.)

The writer perhaps means that he had not been seen by these churches since his conversion. The church of Jerusalem itself was in Judea; and Paul's mission to so distant a city as Damascus could hardly have been his first expedition of the same kind. In that city again, still within three

years of the crucifixion, he finds the Messianist "Cause" flourishing and stays with the "disciples."

The legend of Peter, far more extravagant than those of Paul and Stephen, agrees with them in this picture of a Christianity older than Jesus the Nazarene. Within a few years of the Master's death Peter is represented as making a sort of pastoral visitation through Palestine. He visits Lydda and Joppa or Jaffa, Samaria and Cæsarea, and everywhere he finds disciples and long-established communities, whose members are called the saints, or the brethren, or the People of Christ. There is no sign that Tabitha, or Dorcas, had ever heard of Jesus the Nazarene, before Peter's coming. Her life had been spent in doing kind and charitable actions. On Peter's arrival, we are told, "all the widows came round him in tears showing the coats and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was among them." Such language points to the existence of a Messianic community or church of old standing, living, like Joseph of Rameh, in expectation of the Kingdom of God.

Not long afterwards the great metropolis of the Levant, Antioch, stands revealed as the headquarters of the whole Christian movement, and this before it has ever been visited by a member of the Galilean group. There the Greek word *Christos* has replaced the Hebrew or Aramaic Messiah—with the after result of letting in a whole flood of Pagan mythology and ritual associated with the name.

The compiler of the Acts, writing a hundred years afterwards, has been sorely puzzled by the mission of Apollos, which he has nevertheless contrived to turn to the honour of Paul. In the Epistles, however, Apollos is described as Paul's

fellow labourer, whom Paul refuses to consider as an opponent, yet certainly does not claim as a follower. He was a Jew from Alexandria, that is to say from the headquarters of Gnosticism, who arrived at Ephesus and began preaching the Good News as he understood it. But if we ignore one doubtful word in the account, it becomes clear that Apollos had never heard of Jesus the Nazarene.

"He had been well instructed in the Cause of the Lord, and with burning zeal he spoke of, and taught carefully, the facts about . . . . .[1] though he knew of no baptism but John's. This man began to speak out fearlessly in the Synagogue; and when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained the Cause of God to him more carefully." (*Acts* xviii. 25, 26.)

On Paul's arrival at Ephesus, after the departure of Apollos, he at once proceeds to correct the other's teaching. He found some disciples of whom he asked: "'Did you, when you became believers in Christ, receive the Holy Spirit?'

"'No,' they answered, 'we did not even hear that there was a Holy Spirit.'

"'What then was your baptism?' Paul asked.

"'John's baptism,' was their answer.

"'John's baptism was a baptism upon repentance,' rejoined Paul, 'and John told the people, speaking of the One Coming after himself, that they should believe in him—that is, in Jesus.'

"On hearing this they were baptised into the faith of the Lord Jesus." (*Acts* xix. 1-5.)

Whatever be the truth as to this curious story, no passage brings out more clearly the distinction between the "believers in Christ," and the believers in Jesus as the Christ. The former were

[1] "The Lord" in the Authorised Version; "Jesus" in the Revised.

the original Church, the Church that had developed silently in the bosom of the Synagogue, and out of the sect of the Pharisees. It was distinguished from the general body of Jews and proselytes by its faith in the celestial Messiah revealed to the prophets in vision, the Son of Man described in all the apocalyptic writings from Daniel to Revelation, and announced by John the Baptist. But this belief was itself a new and heretical one. It was a heresy against the strict monotheism which recognised no divine Person except Jehovah ; it was a belief for which there was no warrant in the Law. And hence it exposed the Christians to persecution independently of any identification of the celestial Christ with the Jesus crucified under Pontius Pilate.

This is the point that seems to have been overlooked by writers on both sides of the historical controversy. If Jesus had lived in the reign of Jannai, if he were the Yeshua ben Panthera put to death a hundred years before our era, these churches of Brethren, and People of Christ, would not be suddenly hearing of him for the first time in the middle of the first century. The sudden outburst of Messianic missionary activity that distracted the Jewish world in the times of Claudius and Nero is a historical phenomenon which it is reasonable to connect with the martyrdom of a prophet in the time of Tiberius. But it cannot reasonably be connected with a rabbi of doubtful character who had been dead one hundred and fifty years, and who was so utterly forgotten that (we are asked to believe) it was possible to transpose his entire career. The Gospels are not more charged with myth and miracle than the Talmud, and they have the advantage of being written within a century of the life they commemorate. The earliest references to Yeshua ben Panthera

are separated by at least two and a half centuries from his life, and have the appearance or being written in a spirit of hostility to the Catholic Church. The silence of secular historians is pleaded against the reality of the life of Jesus the Nazarene. The name of Yeshua ben Panthera has never been mentioned by any secular historian down to the present hour.

> I have no sympathy with the writers who ignore the legend of Ben Panthera, or dismiss it as a "Jewish lie"—it contains details that throw a curious and unexpected light on the crucifixion story —but I can have still less respect for a writer like Haeckel, who, dismissing all his scientific caution, blindly pins his faith to the malicious gossip of the old women of the Ghetto. (I hope to examine the whole problem more thoroughly hereafter.)

The best explanation of the history seems to lie in the consideration that the Messianic Faith, as it took a more Zarathustrian and universal cast, and thus became more suited to the Gentiles, became more alien from the orthodoxy and the patriotism of the Jews. The worshippers of the celestial Christ, the Son of Man of the apocalyptic writings, were passing insensibly from unitarianism to trinitarianism. The proclamation of the martyred Jesus as an incarnation of the Messiah was just the addition needed to make the wrath of the orthodox boil over. But in the nature of the case it can only have grown by degrees into an article of faith binding on the Christians themselves. The belief at first persecuted and afterwards preached by Paul was the belief that God had a Son, and not necessarily the belief that Jesus was that Son. How far, if ever, Paul became a believer in Jesus the Nazarene is a question foreign to this inquiry, and perhaps the books

of the New Testament have been too much sophisticated to admit of its ever being satisfactorily answered. The question was still in dispute when the Letters of John were penned in the second century in the Christian church of Ephesus.

It was in the course of this inter-Christian controversy that the books of the New Testament were written, and the result is to afford the most decisive of all proofs that Jesus the Nazarene was an historical personage. In every controversy there are certain facts which no one feels called on to prove, nor even to assert in so many words, because they are taken for granted. They are common ground, because they are matter of common knowledge. Such is the case here. In the New Testament the life and death of Jesus are never for one moment in dispute. There is much argument about his resurrection. Witnesses are cited, apostles give their testimony, Paul thunders that without this the Christian faith would be in vain. But there is no such argument about the crucifixion. The facts were too recent, too public and too notorious to need insisting on. Half Jerusalem had seen it, all Jewry had begun to ring with it. It was a transaction not done in a corner.

The argument is really much stronger. What we have to grasp is that the fact which the Christian of our day is called upon to prove, the Christian of that day was called upon to apologise for. The doctrine of the Atonement had not come into being on the morrow of Calvary. It may be said to have come into being, or rather into acceptance, as an explanation of Calvary; as part of the excuse which believers in Jesus were obliged to make for their Master's ignominious end. That end was not the one that would have been invented for their prophet by the sons of

Zebedee, or by writers aiming to impress them. We know *their* taste in sacred biography. Angels appear on every page; the heavens open and a Divine Dove descends, followed by a Divine Voice. The Lord rises from his tomb and ascends in triumph through the clouds. That was how the story should have ended in the opinion of the evangelists. The crucifixion stuck in their minds as an evil reminiscence. They could not think of it with patience. The Lord had been betrayed. False witnesses had been suborned against him. The judge had pronounced him innocent. His fellow sufferers had testified in his favour. The priests and scribes and Pharisees were murderers. A book was written to prove that all the most revered prophets of the Jews had been similarly murdered.

> This work, the Ascension of Isaiah, which has been recently recovered, appears to be referred to in the New Testament: "They were stoned to death, they were tortured, they were sawn asunder, they were put to the sword," etc. (*Hebrews* xi. 37.) There is little foundation in the Old Testament for these statements, beyond the brief imprisonment of Jeremiah as Nebuchadnezzar's partisan. The Catholic Church showed its good sense by rejecting the *Ascension*, in which the whole story of the Gospel is put into the mouth of Isaiah as a literal prediction.

Such were the circumstances in which the Catholic Gospels came into existence. They began as apologies, not as biographies, and they were addressed in the first place to Jewish believers in the Gospel according to Zarathustra.

We have now reached the point at which the history of Christianity is resolved into the biography of Christ. And as we look back over the way we have come we are able to see that the

essential correspondence between the two is something altogether greater and more significant than any of the likenesses of liturgy and legend that occur upon the surface. The wondrous legend of the Saviour changes into an allegory of Genius and its part on earth ; and the long secular annals of the Divine Man may almost be summed up in the language of the Catholic Church.

We see the Divine Man in the beginning as the Word, in whom was life, and the life was the light of men. We see him next as the incarnation of the Divine Spirit, born of the Virgin Mother. He is called Immanuel—" God with us " ; Son of God, and Son of Man. He is a king and a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is anointed, crowned with thorns, and put to death by ignorant hands, to save men from the consequences of their sins. We watch his death, burial and resurrection. He ascends into heaven, and the story of mythology repeats the story of his life on earth.

The scenes, the words, are all familiar to us. The Genius is the Hero of some world Mystery, the title of which would seem to be the Initiation of the Saviour. "Was he not bound to undergo this suffering before entering into his glory ? " It is the education of the Angel Overman to be the helper of the Underman. " For in that he hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." The wizard of the prime shall lay aside the terrors of his godhead, and come amongst men as their friend and brother.

The Good News of Jesus Christ—if we should not rather write Good Novel—in the form in which it has reached us, reads like the history repeated in the form of a parable. And what may be thought truly surprising, the foregoing interpretation of it is to be found in the great heretical

Letter to the Hebrews. This is not all plagiarism and accident. This is entitled to be read as a psychic revelation ; the indication of some universal tendency and moral law, more complex but not less trustworthy than the law of gravitation, the measure to which all the planets move about the sun.

The view that seems to underlie that most eloquent of all the books of the New Testament is that the created Son of God was sent down on earth to learn sympathy with human suffering, and thus to fit himself for the office of Interpreter between man and God. In the same way pious men have believed that their earthly life and warfare was a training for some higher unknown destiny elsewhere. Such speculations are outside the modest limits of this work, in which we have confined ourselves to studying the revelations of the Creator, without attempting to explore his reasons. The history of mankind discloses the presence and activity of a factor for which I have found no better name than idealism. It is the impulse that plainly urges man to take what seems to him a conscious, voluntary part in the work of creation, by reforming all things to a more glorious model, beginning with himself. It is as a guide to this religion, the religion of this life, that history has the clearest title to be heard.

If the foregoing pages point to any truth, it seems to be that the Divine Man is a type of the divine in man. The race is not promoted all at once, nor all together. The higher race comes at first in single spies, instead of in battalions. The prophet is thus, in the words of Paul, an abortion, born out of due time, dowered with the thoughts and feelings of the next generation rather than his own. He suffers accordingly, suffers in a world whose ways are strange to him, and in which his

course among the Earthmen with whom his lot is cast may be compared to that of a dancer in the Orphic mysteries, brought by his progress into rude collision with the barbarian throng, treading their different measure in honour of their bloody Earth Gods. He suffers on behalf of mankind, since he is a pioneer, making the way smooth for all that are to follow. He is the gentleman of the future; he is the king of to-morrow, and the aureole of genius is his crown of thorns.

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